POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE MURDER OF MR. HAYES.

Vol. III.—No. 35.

THE CRIME OF CATHERINE HAYES

Who was Burnt at the Stake for Petit Treason.

"O, curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Othello," Act III. Sc. 3.

PART II.

SUCH power had Catherine Hayes exercised over her two young men acquaintances that she was enabled to induce them to become her accomplices in the terrible crime she had determined upon—the murder of her husband; the man who for more than twenty years had idolised her. During the whole of their married life he had gratified her every wish, had estranged himself from his parents, had blighted his life for her sake, and, finally, had lost his self-respect by giving way to drink in his futile attempts to drown sorrow in the bowl.

Mr. Hayes returned to his home in the Tyburn Road on the 1st day of March, 1725, after having been absent for nearly three weeks. His business had evidently been very remunerative, for he was in the best of spirits, and brought with him a good round sum in notes and gold. It was late in the afternoon when he made his appearance, and his wife, to his pleasure and surprise, was dressed in her smartest, and in the best of tempers, considering how they had parted. But Catherine was a consummate actress, and could even deceive her husband, who knew her, it is to be presumed, pretty well after his long experience. However, he was undoubtedly deceived on this occasion, for he had been drinking, and was most amiably disposed.

A repast having been prepared for him, of which he took sparingly, his pipe was filled for him by the wife of his bosom, and he sat in the armchair beside the blazing wood fire (for it was very cold for the time of year) the picture of contentment.

About seven in the evening a knock came to the door, and it was opened by Mrs. Springate, the lodger on the ground floor, who announced Mr. Wood, who had called to see if Mr. Hayes had yet returned.

Of course this had been all previously arranged by the conspirators, and when the young man entered he was cordially received by the master of the house, who bade him be seated, and desired his wife to pour out a horn of "mountain wine" (a strong kind of port grown in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees, and greatly consumed about this period), when they drank heartily together. It was not long before Conspirator No. 3 arrived upon the scene. The young tailor let himself in with his key, and, instead of proceeding up to his room at the top of the house, hearing voices within the apartments of the Hayes, tapped at the door and was admitted by madam.

He, also, was accorded a welcome by the master. Another horn was filled for the newcomer. The wine flowed freely, and Mr. Hayes became exceedingly merry, declaring that he had not drank of such good wine as this during his absence. In praise of the "mountain," he declared that there was not a headache in a butt of it, and he could drink a dozen bottles without becoming intoxicated, even although they had amongst them consumed a guinea's worth of the good liquor already. A proposal was at once made by the tailor that "if Hayes could drink six bottles of 'mountain' without being intoxicated, he would pay for it; but that Hayes should be the paymaster if the liquor made him drunk, or if he failed of drinking the quantity."

This was at once agreed to, and Mrs. Hayes proceeded to the wine vault close by to purchase the necessary quantity of "mountain," accompanied by the two men, who insisted upon helping her to carry it. "Now," said the woman, "will be the time for the committal of the deed. Now that he is certain to be perfectly intoxicated, he could be quickly and safely despatched. Never would there be such an opportunity."

But Wood hesitated. Hayes had befriended him more than once. The man's mind in a state of drunkenness was not in a fit state, he argued, for him to be launched into eternity. He begged them to await another opportunity. But the tailor agreed with the woman, with whom he seemed so much enamoured, that it were no sin to kill such a man, and that there could be no time like the present. So the three on the return from the wine vault in cold blood plotted taking the life of this helpless man, and returned with the wine which was to help them to effect their infamous purpose.

And now let us picture the interior of the rooms in Tyburn Road in which the tragedy is to be enacted. It is easy enough, for every little detail of that evening's doings came out at the trial with sickening distinctness.

The suite of apartments consist of but three rooms upon the first floor—the front, a sitting-room, comfortably if not elegantly furnished; the back, a bedroom, a very spacious, square apartment, with massive four-post mahogany bedstead dressed with white hangings. There is little other furniture in the room save a few chairs, a dressing-table, and some heavy carved oaken chests. The floor is without carpet, but the boards are polished, and a few skin rugs are thrown upon the ground carelessly. The third room is a kitchen, furnished with bright copper cooking utensils and china of considerable value for people in their position. In the corner of the kitchen is a sink, connected with a drain-pipe, which passes through the room belonging to Mr. Springate below, thence discharging into the street.

It is near upon ten o'clock at night, and all the occupants of the house have retired, with the exception of the Hayes and their two guests. The host is making a desperate effort to consume the wine and win his bet, whilst the two men sit drinking beer, keeping the poor drunken fool plied with the wine as they in turn refill his drinking-horn.

By the time he has consumed the fifth bottle he is getting very drunk, and, attempting to stand, he falls forward upon the table with a giggling, idiotic laugh. He has to be assisted back to his chair, where he mutters incoherently, rolling his head about in a meaningless manner, and spluttering as his tongue protrudes when he attempts to speak. But there is one more bottle of "mountain wine" to consume, and his reason has not yet quite left him, although he is a pitiable object. Again and again the drinking-horn is filled, and the red wine trickles from the corners of his mouth. But, with a dogged stubbornness he fights against nature, and, with an effort worthy of a better cause, gulps down the last goblet of the sixth bottle and wins his wager. With a vacant look (into which he in vain tries to throw an expression of triumphant satisfaction) he, after some few attempts, rises from his chair, and, staggering through the doorway into the adjoining bedroom, is just able to throw

himself across the bed with his legs dangling upon the floor. The wine has stupefied him, his reason has left him—never to return!

At this moment Catherine Hayes re-enters the sitting-

"Now is the time," said the woman.

room. In her basket she has three other bottles of wine. With her keenness of calculation she has feared that the sixth bottle would not succeed in doing its work, so had slipped out to the wine vaults to procure more. She has, therefore, missed the last act of the comedy. But the curtain is now to rise on the tragedy, and Catherine Hayes is cast for the leading rôle.

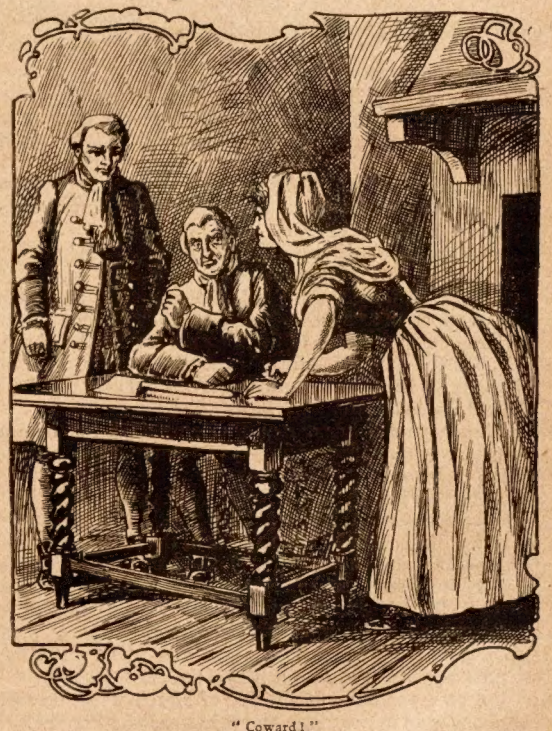
There is an awful silence in the house, for the March wind has lulled, and the rain has ceased for the moment to rattle against the casements of the windows. Thomas Wood sits as pale as death, for he is unwilling at the last moment to deal the murderous blow with the small hatchet that Catherine Hayes has placed upon the table before him. She turns to the other man. She knows that she is sure of him. Then, looking him full in the eyes, she points her long forefinger at the weapon and says in a trembling voice, "You—you take it. Strike hard! Let there be but one blow. Quick!" Then, turning to Wood, she hisses in his ear the word "Coward!"

Quickly, eagerly, as if some honour had been conferred unexpectedly upon him, the slayer of human life rushes furiously into the bedchamber. The hatchet is uplifted and comes down obliquely upon the side of the victim's head. In his anxiety the murderer has misjudged his aim, and the effect is to bring back feeling to the unhappy man—to awake him from his torpor, and the agony is so intense that his feet, which rest upon the flooring, beat quickly and heavily upon the bare wooden planks. So pronounced is the stamping that Mrs. Springate rushes upstairs to know what is amiss. She is met by Catherine Hayes at the door, who assures her in the blandest possible manner that she regrets that her husband and child should have been disturbed of their rest; but they are having a little merriment with some friends who are staying with them. Half satisfied only, Mrs. Springate retires to her own rooms. She had heard the "dance of death."

In the meanwhile, Wood, now finding that there is no going back, rushes into the bedchamber, and to finish the awful business and prevent alarm, brings the hatchet down crash, crash upon the skull of the poor man. A quiver passes through his body, the legs swing limply on the side of the bed, and Mr. Hayes is a corpse.

But the ugly business is not yet finished. There is much yet to be done. How is the body to be disposed of? Catherine Hayes, still as cool as if nothing serious has taken place, bids them be seated in the dining-room. The horns of wine are filled, and they drink deeply after their terrible performance. The woman insists that the only way to avoid discovery is to get rid of the body as soon as possible. It must be done at once. She will superintend the process. Entering the chamber once more, the three wretches drag the body, still warm, across the bed, face downwards, until the head is brought over a large wooden pail which Catherine holds. With a long, sharp knife Wood then hacks away at the neck in his endeavour to decapitate. It is not so easy, though, and it is found necessary to bring into requisition the chopper once more. At last the head is removed and dropped into a huge pail which is now half filled with steaming blood. This vessel is held firmly by the hands of Catherine Hayes, whilst the two men complete the gruesome operation. Quantities of blood are caught from the trunk in pails, which are emptied down the kitchen sink, which is flushed by the woman with pails of water.

Again they adjourn to the sitting-room for further consultation, and to steady themselves with more drink. It is now past midnight, and Catherine proposes that in the early morning the head shall be boiled in a large vessel in the kitchen until the flesh comes away and recognition is impossible. The men, however, disagree, and point out the danger of keeping a face that could be so easily recognised long enough to complete such a process. They argue about the risk and inconvenience of such a proceeding, and declare that the most sensible way to dispose of that which would if



"Coward!"

seen prove such undeniable evidence against them would be to cast it in the Thames. After a long consultation this is agreed to, and the men put on their cloaks and hats, take up the head, which is still in the pail, and are let out quietly into the street, the awful object being only covered by a

CATHERINE HAYES.

cloth, whilst the pail is carried by the two trembling murderers in turn. One piece of evidence is removed from the scene of the crime, and Catherine Hayes draws a long sigh of relief, and, even at that time of the morning, commences to mop up the blood which is upon the floor, and procures wrappers for the remains of the corpse which is to be removed on the following day.

It is showing a pale grey sky in the east as the men return from their diabolical mission. They have been across the fields, too, from the Tyburn Road to Westminster, and there at a wharf at the end of Horseferry Lane have cast the head into the dark waters of the Thames, leaving the bloody pail upon the banks, fearful of making too much noise by splashing, for there are several barges moored near the shore with watchmen aboard.

They have met few abroad at such a time, for there is no regular organisation of police, and nobody to challenge them, for it was not until 1737 (twelve years after the murder of Mr. Hayes) that an Act was introduced for the well-ordering and regulating a night watch—"a matter of very great importance for the preservation of the persons and properties of the inhabitants, and very necessary to prevent fires, murders, burglaries, robberies, and other outrages and disorders." By this Act the night watch were "enjoined to apprehend all night walkers, malefactors, rogues, vagabonds, and disorderly persons whom they found disturbing the public peace, or suspected of evil designs."

But on the morning of the 2nd of March, 1725, no such guardians were in existence, and it was easy for criminals to pursue their evil ways at night in the cities of London and Westminster, so the two murderers disposed of their gruesome burden and returned to the house of their mistress in the Tyburn Road, to which they were quietly admitted, and, after imbibing more liquor, went to bed between the sheets saturated by the blood of their victim, whose body now lay stiff and cold in the corner of the chamber.

Westminster in those days must have been a strange mixture of slums and important buildings. Of the former there still are traces, but few in number; of the latter, the Abbey still stands, as then, with its sanctuary and precincts little altered. Then, as now, there were crowds of houses between King Street and the river, but to the westward it was all open country, whilst that part which contained the most infamous dens and vilest ruffians was known as the "Desert," lying to the south of Tothill Fields, and bounded on the north by Tothill Street, Broadway, and Petty Grance, its southern boundary being the Horseferry Road; the Abbey lay along the east, and the western marsh is now marked by Rochester Row and Francis Street. Actually under the very shadow of the Cathedral were then gathered together the most dangerous, the most villainous wretches in the whole country. Old Pye Street, Orchard Street, Duck Lane, the Almonry, and St. Anne's Street were the homes of the professional street beggar and the professional thief. No respectable people could venture into these streets, so little wonder that the murderers of Mr. Hayes were unnoticed in such a neighbourhood at the dead of night.

The morning of the 2nd of March was clear and dry, for the wind had again risen and chased away the rain clouds. Down by the Horse Ferry (then a passage-way across the

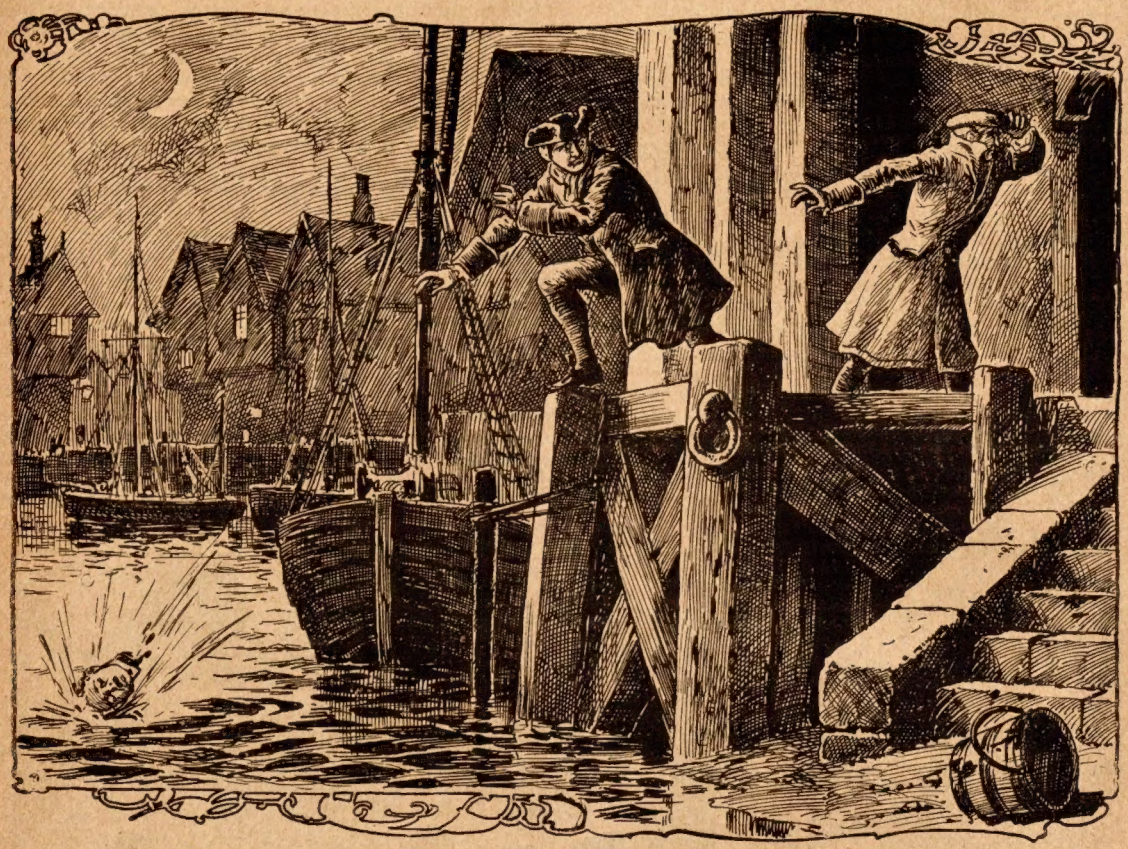
Saw the head of a man.

Thames which preceded the Lambeth Bridge, then in course of reconstruction) were lime wharves and small docks. These existed on the very spot upon which the old penitentiary, known as Millbank Prison, afterwards stood for about a century, and which has now given place to the handsome edifice in which the Tate collection of pictures are now hung.

It was about six o'clock upon this particular March morning that a watchman named Robinson, attached to the lime wharf, noticed a large wooden pail besmeared with blood, and, looking into the dock, to his horror he saw the head of a man floating in the water. Hastily calling assistance, they with boathooks dragged it to the bank. The extraordinary discovery soon became known throughout Westminster, and the magistrates and parish officers quickly assembled, the head having been taken into the churchyard of St. Margaret's.

remarkable that in many of these Thames mysteries the tide has well served the cause of justice.

The head, which was besmeared with blood and mud, was unrecognisable, so instructions were given by Justice Lambert that it should be carefully washed, that the hair should be combed, and that it should then be placed upon a pole in the churchyard, facing the most public thoroughfare, that it might be recognised by those who knew the deceased. Orders were likewise given that "the parish officers should attend this exhibition of the head to take into custody any suspicious person who might discover signs of guilt on the sight of it." And so the head of the unfortunate Mr. Hayes was set up on a pole in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, to be gazed upon by thousands of people of all classes who came many miles for the purpose of identification or out of sheer curiosity.



CAST THE HEAD INTO THE DARK WATERS OF THE THAMES.

The hue and cry was at once commenced, and strict injunctions were given to the parish officers to "make the most diligent search for the body." The high-constable of Westminster, "on a presumption that the body might, on the following night, be thrown where the head had been (a most ridiculous conclusion to come to), gave private orders to the inferior constables to attend during the night, and stop all coaches, or other carriages, or persons with burdens coming near the spot, and examine if they could find the body or any of the limbs."

How easy it must have been for murderers and robbers to evade the law in those days. But there was a greater power at work. Providence's hand had held back the head, the first and most important clue to the murder. It would appear that a lighterman had heard a splash when the tide was on the ebb. This was indeed providential, for it was not carried down the stream, as the murderers had hoped for. The tide had turned and washed it again ashore. It is re-

And now let us return once again to the house in Tyburn Road. It was a busy morning with the perpetrators of this foul deed. Wood had been despatched early in the day to purchase a large box in which it was intended to place the body and remove it at night. When it arrived, however, it was found much too small to hold the remains. It was decided then to dismember the body, and here are the particulars recorded at the time of the trial:—"Mrs. Hayes proposed that it should be put into a box and buried, and the other parties agreeing to this, she purchased the box, which, on being sent home, was found too little to contain it, on which she recommended the chopping off the legs and arms, which was done; but the box being still too small, the thighs were likewise cut off, and all the parts packed together, and the box put by till night, when the two men took out the pieces of the mangled body, and putting them in two blankets, carried them out of the house unnoticed."

And so the remains were cleared away from the house,

the men taking them into Marylebone Fields and throwing them, wrapped in torn blankets and old rags, into a ditch, thinking that now that the remains were disposed of it would be impossible to establish their guilt.

Little did they dream, however, that the head had been found; and it was not until the next day that they heard of the discovery. This news somewhat unnerved the man Wood; but Catherine and the young tailor made light of it, although, when Mrs. Springate came to them and told them that she had noticed a quantity of congealed blood in the drainpipe leading from their sink, they exchanged anxious looks, and it was thought advisable to treat the woman as a particular friend. Whether she was ever taken into the secret never transpired, but Catherine Hayes paid up her back rent and induced her to leave the house and take apartments with her at Mr. Jones's distillery in Westminster. This she readily did, so it would seem that Mrs. Springate knew more than she cared to admit of the foul deed.

In the meanwhile, the mysterious murder was the talk of London and Westminster, and although thousands of people came to see the head, nobody could or would swear to its identity, although Mr. Hayes must have been well known to many people resident within a few miles of the Abbey.

At length a young fellow named Bennett, who was an apprentice to the king's organ-builder, went to see the object that was attracting the curiosity of people of all ranks. He looked at it attentively, and noticed a great resemblance to Mr. Hayes, with whom he had been slightly acquainted.

Instead of going to the officers, however, he went direct to Mrs. Hayes, and told his suspicions. The woman at once replied that her husband, who was out of London, was in good health, and she should advise him to be most careful of his statements or he would be getting himself into serious trouble. The youth after this preserved a silence. But a journeyman tailor named Patrick, who worked in Monmouth, and had visited his brother "snip" at the house of Mr. Hayes, and had met that gentleman on more than one occasion, was confident that it was the head of the man whom he knew.

He conveyed his impression to his master, when four other workmen from the same shop who knew the deceased visited the churchyard and returned exactly of the same opinion. It so happened that the very man who was living with Catherine Hayes, and who was one of the murderers, worked for this same shop, and he was interrogated by his shopmates. In answer he declared that he had left Mr. Hayes well in bed in the morning, therefore the head could not belong to him.

The web was gradually being woven around them, and these contradictory stories were certain to prove fatal to them in the long run. Nevertheless, they allayed suspicion as to the identity for a time, and then, curiously enough, an incident occurred which promised to give them a chance to evade justice, and for the moment they breathed freely. Amongst those who went to see the head was a poor woman from Kingsland whose husband had been absent from the very day before the murder was supposed to be committed. After looking at it for a while, she was convinced that it was that of the missing man. Closely she examined it, and although she was not sufficiently sure to make oath, her belief was so strong that it was thought that identification was practically established, and for absolute proof it would need only the finding of the body.

So the head was taken down from the pole, and, fortunately, the magistrate ordered that it should be placed in a glass case filled with spirits of wine, so that the features might be preserved, and, if necessary, further identification be established. Mr. Westbrook, a surgeon, was therefore entrusted with this operation, and the head was only to be exhibited to those who had a special permit from the magistrates.

Most diligent search was then made for the remains of what was now generally supposed to be the corpse of the

THE HEAD WAS SET UPON A POLE

Kingsland man, but the officers were unsuccessful. In the meanwhile, Wood had gone down to his home at Harrow-on-the-Hill, where his widowed mother kept an inn. There he was a great favourite, and bore an excellent character, and in his parent's eyes there was nobody like her dear Tom. And he had been a good lad, too, for when his father died he not only looked after the little roadside inn with his mother, but occupied much of his time in working in the fields and saving money for his widowed parent. But what a change had come over the young fellow since his visit to London. The widow cursed the day that he had left their village. Once the bright, cheerful, dutiful son, he was now the restless, irritable man, who could settle down nowhere. He was not the same being. Now and again he would have money sent him, from what source his mother could never tell, and then the carrier would bring parcels of clothes of finer material than her late husband had ever worn. They were, it is unnecessary to state, the clothes once worn by Hayes, and fitted Wood as if made for him.

Catherine Hayes, true to her promise, or fearful lest the young man should, through remorse, betray himself and her, kept him well supplied with money also, but begged that he would keep away from London as much as possible.

It is a curious trait, however, in a murderer's character. Nothing can dissuade them from revisiting the scene of their crime or seeking the society of their accomplices, and Thomas Wood could not resist the desire to ride over to Westminster and call upon Catherine Hayes and her newly-established paramour.

There was little for him to learn, however. The body had not been discovered, and although the web was being spun closer and closer around them they little knew of what was happening. One thing they were perfectly certain about, and that was the absence of Mr. Hayes for an indefinite period would be certain to excite grave suspicion. Besides, the very action of the murderers was tending to that end. What her motive was can never be surmised. Perhaps it was flight. But shortly after the crime she at once set about collecting her late husband's accounts.

Amongst those indebted to him was a relation of theirs who had married a Mr. Davis. Hayes had lent her some money in the ordinary way of business (for it will be remembered that the dead man's occupation was that of a money-lender during recent years), and Catherine, having discovered the bond amongst her late husband's papers, employed a person to write a letter in the name of the deceased demanding settlement, and threatening proceedings in case of refusal.

Mr. Davis replied that he would get a gentleman to represent him in London who would call upon Mr. Hayes in respect to the affair. This was by no means what the murderess desired; but this was followed up quickly by several unexpected incidents, for a Mr. Longmore, who kept the Green Dragon Inn, at King Street, Westminster, and who was a near relation to Hayes, was linking up such damning evidence against the woman, whom he had from the earliest stage of the tragedy suspected, that would when complete make even this fiend incarnate tremble for her life and bring about the beginning of the end.

He Was Sorry for the Widow.

LORD COCKBURN, the Scotch judge, was once sitting in the Outer House, when a very important case was commenced, in which there were several barristers representing many parties. One young advocate, Mr. MacTurk, had a very peculiar voice, a sort of squeak, and was also distinguished for certain qualities and peculiarities that only too often almost convulsed the court with laughter. Lord Cockburn seeing Mr. MacTurk standing by the side of one of the leading counsel, as if interested in the case, said to him: "Whom do you appear for, Mr. MacTurk?"

"I'm for the widow, Mrs. Brown, my lord," answered the young lawyer, with a smirk, whereat the judge turned aside and audibly exclaimed, "The Lord help her!"

THE FALSE Lord Willoughby.

An Extraordinary Case of Mistaken Identity which led to the Imprisonment of an Innocent Man.

"Poetic JUSTICE, with her lifted scale
Where, in nice balance, truth with GOLD she weighs."
—POPE, "Dunciad.

PART II.

ADOLPH BECK rested in Holloway Gaol, awaiting the trial which he was certain would end in his honourable acquittal. He had frequent interviews with his solicitor, Mr. X, and arranged with him that Mr. Gill, Q.C., and Mr. Clarke should be briefed to defend him at the Old Bailey when he was called upon to occupy the position which John Smith had done some nineteen years before.

At last the day dawned when the Norwegian was to be put upon his trial. The case was to come on before the Common Sergeant, Mr. Fulton, who, it will be remembered, prosecuted Smith in 1877 on behalf of the Crown.

Just before Beck was put into the dock he saw for the first time the barrister who was to plead for him. The first words of his counsel were far from reassuring: "What have you been up to with these women?" The wretched foreigner felt that he had no friend in court; even the very men paid to save him from ignominy had a lingering doubt as to his entire innocence!

The charges, thirty in all, were read over to him, and he pleaded "Not guilty." Then a jury was impanelled to try him.

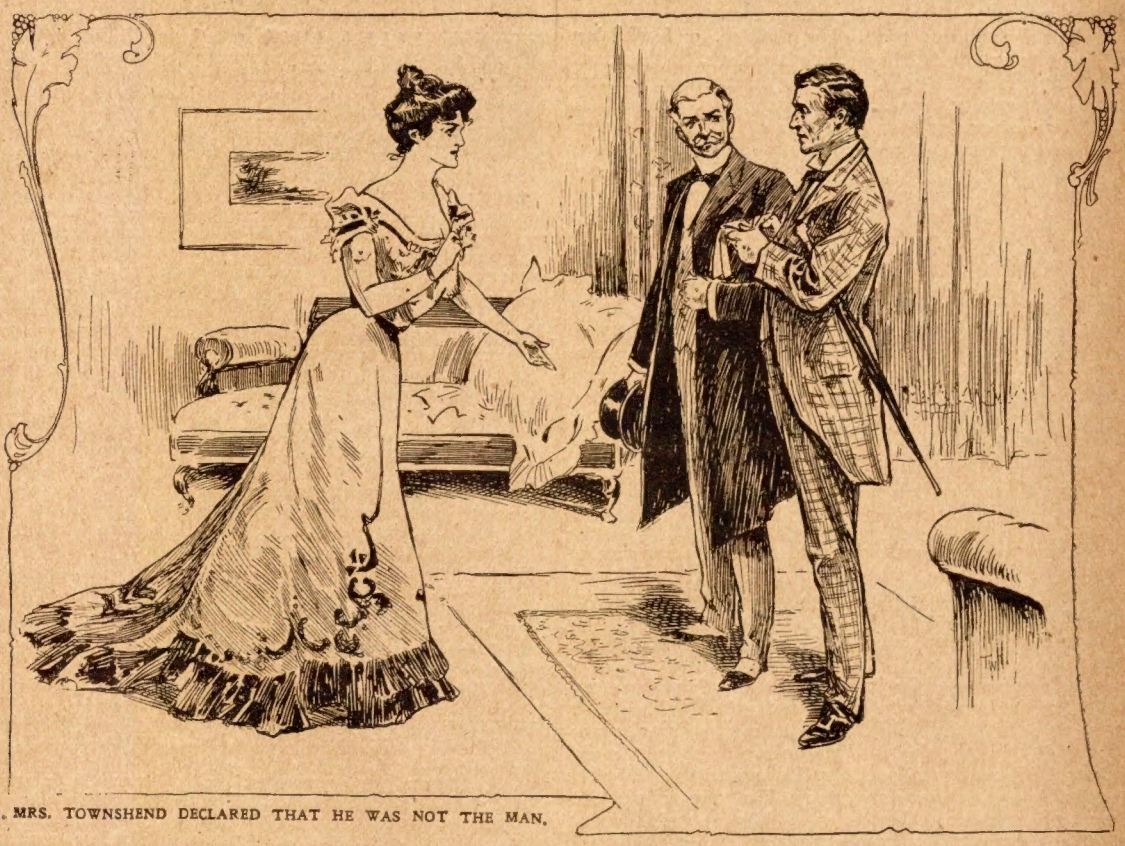
For the first time the public were given the names of the ladies who brought the grave accusations against Beck, for Mr. Shiels, at the Westminster Court, had permitted them to give their evidence without disclosing them. This was done out of a feeling that ladies who become candidates for free quarters in St. John's Wood under the protection of a man whom they have only seen for a few minutes, naturally are very bashful and would shrink from appearing in the public journals. The list of those accusing the "Earl of Wilton" and the value of the goods said to have been stolen, is as follows: Ottile Messonier, £30 worth; Kate Breakfield, £14; Daisy Grant, £3; Marion Taylor, £1 4s.; Alice Sinclair, £7; Ethel Townsend, £150; Juliet Klutt, £2 10s.; Fanny Nutt, £7; Minnie Lewis, 10s.; Evelyn Miller, £9; total, about £224.

The Crown was represented by Mr. Avory. In opening the case he said that it was not disputed that all these thefts were committed by one and the same person, so that the issue before the jury was really as to whether the prisoner at the bar was that individual or not. He pointed out how the prisoner, or the mysterious thief who had represented himself to be Earl Wilton or Lord Winton de Willoughby to each of these ladies, had borrowed rings, etc., and had decamped with them. How he had a house at St. John's Wood, which was in need of a female occupant, and how to each had been held out the dazzling prospect of being mistress of that charming villa. They had all received cheques which were subsequently dishonoured. Some of the cheques were really promissory notes, while others were taken from a cheque-book which had been stolen from a Mrs. Gardiner. He then proceeded to call witnesses.

The stories of the ladies were almost identical, save that of Mrs. Townsend, from whom the greatest amount of plunder had been obtained, and who really does not seem to have understood the whole of the transaction with the elusive stranger.

That lady was the widow of a gentleman who had died in India. She met the prisoner, or his double, one day in Piccadilly. He spoke to her and asked her if she were not Lady Somebody. She said that she was not; then the man inquired if she knew Lord A——, and she said that she did slightly, but was much more intimate with his brother. The

accused then remarked that he had just come from Canada, where he had been staying with the A—— family for some little while, and asked if he could not call on her next day. She agreed, and he did so, saying that he was Lord Winton de Willoughby. After inquiring why she was living alone in a flat, he suggested that she should occupy an empty house of his in St. John's Wood, and Mrs. Townsend said that she would have to know him a good deal better first. However, he managed to talk her over somewhat, and presented her with a cheque to buy dresses. Then he persuaded her to lend him her ring, from which he was about to have several diamond half hoops made for her. His eyes then lighted on a valuable pair of elephant's tusks, which he took, saying that he knew a man who could make them into a handsome frame for an inkstand. A bracelet and several other articles were added to the spoil collected for the thief, and then Lord Willoughby wrote out a cheque for £120, which he left, with instructions that it was to be presented at the Balham Bank. When he had had tea he departed, promising to send



MRS. TOWNSHEND DECLARED THAT HE WAS NOT THE MAN.

the rings and other goods back by a commissionaire on the following morning. In all, he netted articles to the value of £150. Cross-examined, she had no notion why he wanted to be so kind to her. She was not in the habit of accepting favours from strangers, but she regarded Lord Willoughby as a man who had really more money to waste than he knew what to do with, and thought that perhaps he had heard of her from her friends in Canada. Nothing disgraceful crossed her mind.

All the witnesses described Beck as a singularly well-dressed man, some saying that when he met them he was wearing a long dust coat, or Newmarket coat, wore white spats; and one declared that he had a brown bowler on when he first spoke to her. These articles of clothing are important to-day, though they were rather ignored by Mr. X at the time of the trial.

The infuriated ladies who had been duped were followed by men of various callings. Sergeant Watts told the court that he had carefully searched all the prisoner's belongings, and had not found the smallest article which had any bearing on the case. All Beck's papers seemed to be in order, and, as far as could be seen from his documents, he was engaged in extensive business.

Mr. Browne, the proprietor of the Covent Garden Hotel, said that the prisoner had lodged at his establishment for six years, but had left in 1894. Mr. Avory asked him why Beck had left, and Browne referred him to his solicitors.

"Did he pay his hotel bill?"

"Ask my solicitors."

The common sergeant cautioned the witness, and told him that he must answer, and then Browne admitted that Beck owed him some £300 for board and lodgings, besides some other money. Further pressed by the Crown counsel, Browne said that the prisoner also owed him about eleven hundred pounds for money lent him to develop mining property in Norway and elsewhere. It may here be mentioned that later Mr. Browne received shares to the value of £1,600 as security for these debts, which prisoner estimated at £1,100 in all.

A sharp passage of arms took place between counsel and witness, until the judge interposed, saying that both he and two other learned commissioners had seen the witness wink at the accused when he entered the box. On this Mr. Gill rose and commenced to cross-examine Mr. Browne, saying that he was anxious to relieve him of the charge of winking in a court of justice. Thereupon Browne indignantly declared that he was not winking at the prisoner, who was no friend of his.

P.C. Eless Spurrell, ER 25, who at the police-court swore positively that Beck and John Smith whom he had arrested in 1877 were one and the same man, was to have been called, but the Crown objected to enter into the question of identity with John Smith. His evidence, however, was embodied in his deposition taken at the inferior court, and which we will now give, as it greatly affected the case.

"I am pensioned from the Metropolitan police. In 1877 I was in the Metropolitan police reserve, E Division, stationed at Hunter Street. On the 7th May, 1877, I was present at the Central Criminal Court when the prisoner, in the name of John Smith, was convicted of felony, stealing ear-rings and a ring, and eleven shillings in money,

the property of Louisa Leonard, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude. I produce the certificate of that conviction. The prisoner is the man."

Cross-examined: "There is no doubt whatever that he is the man. I know what is at stake on my answer, and I say without doubt he is the man. I took him into custody. There were seventeen different cases on that occasion."

Mr. Guerrin, the celebrated expert in handwriting, deposed that the writing on the cheques which Earl Wilton, Lord Willoughby, and Lord Winton de Willoughby had signed in the present case was identical with the handwriting of John Smith when he signed cheques as Lord Willoughby in 1877. He was positive of this.

Mr. Gill then addressed the jury for the defence. He said that this was undoubtedly a case of mistaken identity. The women had been so excited at the rich prize which was nearly within their grasp that they had paid but slight attention to the person of the rogue who had victimised them. When they found that they had been duped, their fury was only equalled by that of a tiger seeking his prey in the jungle. They were ready to charge the first person they could lay their hands upon.

moreover, the similarity of the writing was not disputed by the prisoner's counsel. Mr. Avory seems to have forgotten that the defence did not deny that the series of frauds were committed by the same person, but they declared that their client was not that person.

Mr. Gill then rose and said that, as some of the females had sworn to the prisoner's voice, perhaps it was advisable that the jury should hear Beck speak. Standing at the front of the dock, the accused then said, "From the beginning to the end of these horrible charges, I have had nothing to do with them. I am absolutely innocent."

On the morning of the third day, Mr. Fulton summed up briefly, saying that whoever the person was who had committed these frauds, he had not a spark of manhood in him. After a brief consultation, the jury found Adolph Beck guilty, and the common sergeant sentenced him to a term of four years for the fraud on Mrs. Townsend, three years for that on Messonier, and three years for those on the other women, the last two terms to run concurrently, making in all seven years' penal servitude.

On hearing this severe punishment, poor Beck, conscious of his own innocence, threw up his hands and cried out, "I

Major Lindholm, Gentleman of the Chamber to the King of Denmark, was called, and swore that he had known Mr. Adolph Beck in 1880 in Lima, where the prisoner used his great influence to have witness granted military rank with the Peruvian army. Mr. Beck was very kind to witness, who was a prisoner when first Beck used his best endeavours to save him from the horrors of a Spanish gaol. He had known Adolph Beck intimately, and had never heard an ill word spoken of him. He was positive that it was in 1880 that he first met Beck in Lima.

He was followed by a Senor Frederico Pezet, the Consul-General for Peru at Liverpool. He first met Beck in 1880, and again met him in 1884, both times in South America, the first time at Lima and the second at Panama. A Colonel Harris also swore that he had known the prisoner as Adolph Beck from 1875 till the outbreak of the Chili-Peruvian war, at Lima, seeing him almost daily. And another gentleman, employed in the Pacific Steam Navigation Co., also gave evidence to the same effect.

The tailor who supplied Beck with clothes swore that he had never made suits of the kind described by the female witnesses for him. That closed the evidence for the defence.

Replying for the Crown, Mr. Avory said that if this was really a case of mistaken identity, the coincidences were most remarkable, for ten women identified him, while the expert on handwriting was emphatic in his declaration that the cheques in the cases of 1877 and 1896 were written by the same person; am absolutely innocent, my lord." He was then hurried down to the cells, and, later, taken to Chelmsford to do the first nine months of his imprisonment.

When clad in prison garb, Beck had a label attached to his arm bearing the letters D.W., with his number, 523. He did not know the full significance of these letters till he reached Portland, when he learnt that D. meant that he was an old convict—in fact, that he was actually convicted as John Smith, although the prosecution had refused to enter into the question of identity at the trial, considering the testimony of Spurrell, at Westminster, sufficient proof.

He wrote petition after petition to the Home Secretary, but without the slightest effect. In the meantime, his lawyer, Mr. X, visited him from time to time in his cell, with a view to getting his consent to part with certain valuable shares and the rights in an invention which was partly Beck's, in order to pay the heavy charges made for his defence, a bill which totalled up to £550. Beck was adamant, and would not allow his property to be sold for a mere song.

One day Beck learnt that John Smith, whom he was supposed to be, was a Jew, and he immediately petitioned to be examined by the prison doctor to prove that he was not of the Hebrew race, and had never undergone the initiatory ceremony of that ancient religion. After some delay, orders were sent that the convict was to be examined, when it was conclusively proved that Beck was not a Jew, therefore not John Smith, and by inference, not the author of the frauds.

Daily he expected his release; but it never came He had further confirmatory proof to offer that he was not Smith in the fact that Beck had begged Mr. X to examine the identification marks of John Smith, as recorded at Scotland Yard. Mr. X declared that he had frequently applied, but had been denied by the authorities all access to the records. One day, however, the lawyer happened to see the scar on Beck's arm, and exclaimed, "Why, that's not like the scar on John Smith's arm at all." How he knew this is a mystery; but he was perfectly correct.

The longest of all imprisonments comes to an end at last, and after serving a little over five years, Beck was liberated on ticket of leave. From the moment of regaining his freedom Adolph Beck had but one thought—the vindication of his good name which had been so cruelly dragged down into the dust.

What made his task the more difficult was the fact that certain papers which had been in his possession in Portland were not forthcoming, while equally important documents which had been in his chambers at the time of his arrest had disappeared; among these being the threatening letter which he had received from the unknown in Paris referring to payment to the bankrupt firm of bankers. Moreover, all his private belongings had vanished, his clothes had gone, his desks, his books, everything had been spirited away, and he found himself practically an outcast. However, he was assisted by various persons, who helped him to get together a wardrobe again, and aided him with their sympathy and advice.

With a view to clearing his character, Mr. Beck applied to the Salvation Army, which useful body possesses a well-equipped investigation department, and he was received in a most kindly manner. At the same time, while working with the disciples of General Booth, Beck did a little detective work himself, and set about finding out where his various accusers lived.

It took him a long while to discover where the lady on whose behalf he had received the heaviest sentence dwelt, but at last he caught sight of Mrs. Townsend in the street, and shadowed her to her home. Watching from a house opposite on another occasion, he waited till she had gone out, and then called and inquired if Mrs. Townsend lived there. "Yes," said the maid. "But there are so many Townsends," added the wily amateur detective. "Is this an Indian lady?" "Yes, sir," replied the maid, "but she is out. Who shall I say called?" "Never mind my name; say that an old friend called to see how she was." With that Beck went off, and next day returned with one of the Salvation Army detectives. The pair were shown in to a well-furnished drawing-room. "Mrs. Townsend?" queried Beck. "Yes," said the lady; "but I do not remember you." "Possibly, but I know you very well. Think again." After a moment Mrs. Townsend declared that she had never set eyes on him before. Then the conversation became general for a little while, till Beck said that he wanted her to assist him in clearing the character of a very dear friend of his, one Adolph Beck. "Ah," said the lady, "I was never very sure of him." "But you will help me to save my friend, won't you?" "Yes, if I can."

Conversation again drifted, till Beck proposed that he should take Mrs. Townsend out to dinner, to which she agreed, though the Salvationist looked horribly shocked. However, Beck had a purpose, and went. The couple had an excellent dinner at a neighbouring restaurant, and the wine was good and plentiful—the pious detective had departed.

Then again Beck turned to the subject of his dear friend, pleading with tears in his eyes that Mrs. Townsend would give him all the information in her power. Little by little the whole story came out; how she was not certain of the identity of poor Adolph until aided by a friendly emissary from the police; how she had never felt sure that the man convicted was really the person who had defrauded her; how she was not in her rooms when the stranger called, but had only seen him in Bond Street for a few minutes.

Then Beck asked her to give him all this in writing; but she said she must think about it. They then left the café, and Beck, promising to tell his friend all about the matter, sent Mrs. Townsend home in a cab. On the 8th of April, 1902, Beck again attended on Mrs. Townsend with the Salvation Army detective, and they brought with them a simple declaration, in which Mrs. Townsend said that she was positive that Beck was not the man who robbed her. Before, however, they produced this, they chatted to the lady, and when she was asked if she could recognise the person who had so cruelly treated her, should she see him again, she said that she could. She then asked after the Beck in whom our hero was interested.

"Would you know him if you saw him?" asked Beck.

"Certainly," replied the lady.

"I am he, Adolph Beck, who served four years for your mistake," exclaimed Beck.

Mrs. Townsend was astounded, and declared vehemently that he was not the man who had robbed her. We may mention here that the penal servitude did not alter Mr. Beck's appearance in the least. Then the couple brought out the declaration, but Mrs. Townsend said that she would sign nothing, as the detectives and police had been to see her, and had told her that she would get into trouble if she signed any paper saying that she was mistaken. She promised, however, to sign the document if some of the other women would do so. The whole of the matter which passed between Beck and Mrs. Townsend, who unfortunately has since died, was embodied in a declaration by the Salvation Army officer who was present at the interview, and leaves no doubt that had the unfortunate woman not been afraid of offending some authority she could have established the injured man's innocence completely.

This is only one of many proofs which the innocent man obtained after months of weary hunting. Another important document is a statutory declaration made by Messrs. John Ruff and Albert Emler, his brother-in-law. John Smith had lodged with Ruff in 1875, at a house in Barnsbury Street, Islington, under the name of William Weis. He stated that he was a captain in the Austrian army. Both Ruff and Emler knew him well. Weis was living with them when he was arrested in 1877. When Weis, or John Smith, had served his term of penal servitude, Ruff and Emler saw him again, and found that he had not altered in the least. Both were positive that Beck was not Smith; he did not resemble him in the least, either in face, figure or speech. For some time Emler's sister-in-law had possessed a photograph of Smith in a group with half-a-dozen other men, all dressed in shooting suits. That photo had disappeared, and no one could say where it had gone to. No one who knew John Smith could mistake him for Adolph Beck. This declaration was sworn to before a Commissioner of Oaths.

Anxious to further strengthen his hand, Mr. Beck went to a well-known West End mercer's where Eless Spurrell, now retired from the police force, is employed as a commissionaire. Seeing him in the doorway, Beck went up to him and addressed him:

"How do you do, Mr. Spurrell?"

"You have the advantage of me. I have never seen you before," responded the ex-sergeant.

"Oh, yes you have. You gave evidence at the Westminster Police Court in 1896 that a prisoner, Adolph Beck, was the same as one John Smith, whom you arrested in 1877."

"You are mistaken, sir. I did not give evidence in that case," protested Spurrell.

The two conversed for a few minutes, Spurrell having no idea to whom he was speaking, and then Beck disclosed his identity, saying, "I am Beck, whom you accused falsely."

A few days later Beck returned with a friend and repeated the conversation which had passed at the first interview, the ex-policeman kept silent, and when pressed about the matter, said that everything could be found in the depositions. He could not recognise Beck. He was then asked to assist in clearing Beck's name, and said that he would think the matter over and see what he could do. Up to the present, however, Spurrell has done nothing.

Beck has also found in England several gentlemen of the highest integrity who knew him well in South America at the very time that John Smith was in prison—men who were in almost daily communication with him, and who could not make any mistake as to identity. These gentlemen can be produced at any moment, and their evidence certainly is strong enough to convince one that a very grave miscarriage of justice has taken place.

At this point the case now rests until some influential person can bring the matter before the notice of the Home Secretary. In the meantime the cloud which is hanging over him is preventing poor Mr. Beck from pursuing his ordinary avocations.

Briefly, here are the main points which could have been brought forward at the trial, but which were not pressed, and which prove that Beck is not Smith, while the Home Office and prosecution agreed that if he was not Smith he was not the guilty person.

Beck is ten years older than Smith. He is a Norwegian, and not a German. He is not a Jew. He was in South America at the time of Smith's conviction and punishment. Miss Messonier and Mrs. Brakefield swore that he had a scar on his neck. Beck had not this scar. Beck was in South America from 1868 to 1885, while Smith was in prison

during the years '77 to '81. Further, ten of the ladies who were brought by the police against Beck, and who had been defrauded with cheques identical to those exhibited in court, could not identify him, while some said that he certainly was not the man. He never wore and had never possessed clothes like those described as worn by "Earl Wilton." Furthermore, Beck's handwriting is very remarkable and far from literate, while he is utterly incapable of copying the signatures alleged to be written by him. No article which had ever belonged to the accusers was found among his possessions, and, more important than all, the man who committed these robberies did so for money. At the moment of his arrest Mr. Beck was worth at least £3,500 from property in Norway, held 4,000 shares in Hannan's Main Reef, which then stood at 10s., but subsequently rose to 19s. each, had an interest in a valuable patent, for which his solicitor, Mr. X, offered him £1,500 after his conviction, and was comfortably established in a well-furnished flat. This knowledge was in the hands of the defence, and one cannot but wonder why nothing was made of it either before the magistrates or at the trial. Added to this, Mr. Beck has a most marked foreign accent—he cannot pronounce a "j," for example, calling "gentlemen" "yentlemen," "just" "yust," and so forth—and could not possibly be mistaken for an Englishman, let alone a British noble, by anybody who had ever heard our native tongue spoken.

It is clear that Beck and Smith are not one and the same person from the above facts, for "once a Jew always a Jew." If, however, he did commit the frauds for which he languished in prison, the following coincidences are remarkable. Smith passed himself off as a British peer, though he had a very slight foreign accent; Beck is said to have impersonated the same peer, in spite of his broken English. Smith selected women of a certain class on whom to practise his swindles; Beck is said to have selected exactly the same class of women for exactly the same frauds. Smith wrote his cheques in a strong, aristocratic handwriting; Beck—in spite of his almost illegible caligraphy—is said to have written his cheques in a hand which so strongly resembled the work of John Smith that an expert could not distinguish between the two writings.

To the most credulous of men it seems too much to ask him to believe that such coincidences could exist in the operations of two men who were ignorant of one another's existence. To the sane man the supposition is absurd, ridiculous, impossible, quite apart from the folly of imagining that anyone could mistake Beck for an Englishman.

No; the case bears one of two interpretations. Either Mr. Adolph Beck has been the victim of one of the cruellest conspiracies of modern times, has wilfully been sworn to by persons well aware of his innocence, for purposes of their own, and consigned to a prison by some enemy or enemies of his, a view which we are loth to take, but which would explain much that is mysterious at present, or this is the most remarkable case of mistaken identity which has ever been placed on the annals of British criminology. Whichever of these two be the true explanation of this case, certain it is—as far as anything human can be certain—that Mr. Beck is an innocent man, who has suffered a long term of imprisonment for no fault of his, and has been either the victim of ignorance or of malice.

But justice, though tardy, should be done, and it is to be hoped that some active steps will be taken to clear the character of this much-injured Norwegian in the eyes of the world, and recompense him for the terrible experience through which he has passed, for the loss of worldly wealth which his false imprisonment has entailed, and, far more important to him, for the years of unmerited disgrace. We cannot give him back his past, but society, through its legal representatives, should at least try to atone for it.

Cheering the Hangman.

A VERY horrible quintuple murder was committed at a small Welsh hamlet in 1878. A Spanish sailor, on tramp, named Garcie, broke into the house of a man named William Walkins and slew him, his wife, and three children. He was convicted on the clearest evidence and hanged at Usk. Such was the horror excited by the deeds of this miscreant, such the detestation of his crimes, that when the executioner left the gaol and proceeded to the railway station—after the fell business was over—he was followed by a huge crowd of men, women, and children, who cheered him as vociferously as they would have done a victorious general, and he was finally carried to his train on the shoulders of four stalwart miners!

He murdered his paramour and her beautiful mistress, who chose death rather than dishonour.

PEDRO CARLO

"'My fair fame I will never lose,'
She cried, with her last breath;
And, rather than dishonour, chose
An honourable death!"
—The Murdered Queen,
An old Ballad.

THE scene of our story is Spain.

The very name of the remarkable country strikes a thrill through the mental fibres of all imaginative mortals

Spain! the land of lost dreams and faded glories, the last haven of maimed and broken chivalry, driven from more prosperous principalities by the iron flail of commerce and the inexorable spears of advancing science; the refuge of romance, the oasis of faith in the ever-increasing desert of European unbelief and materialism.

And yet, with all her manifest charms, the elements composing this remarkably picturesque country may be described as largely antithetical.

The vineyards, the golden orange groves, the floral bowers of antique Spain that Nature has made so beautiful, have one and all been the scene of savage onslaughts and sanguinary encounters, and are, to this day, infested with a people quick to anger, and as ready to spill blood as they are at all times prepared for prayer and supplication to the King of Heaven and His saintly bodyguard.

Any moment in Spain is propitious for the invocation of the divine powers, any moment is propitious for the slaying of one's neighbour.

Of course, such a land is the natural home of the love tragedy; but, apart from the constant unsheathing of the jealous knife, it must be confessed that the assassin's recreant blade catches the moonbeams with undue frequency in this country, where chivalry and nobility of temper are popularly supposed to hold unquestioned sovereignty.

It must be remembered that the Spain which produced Don Quixote, likewise produced the bull fight.

The following story will exemplify the above assertions:

Some forty years ago, in the beautiful and picturesque town of Belorado, near Burgos, there resided a Spanish nobleman named Don Mallaina.

He was the last of a long and illustrious line of grandees, the sole remaining representative of a house whose name had ever been blazoned on the records of Spain's chivalry and valour.

He was a handsome young man, about two-and-thirty years of age, somewhat spare in stature, and with a face which shone with undeniable nobility. He had but lately been joined in marriage to a charming lady, whose exalted birth and natural accomplishments made her an admirable mate for the illustrious Don, and a most fitting person to become the mother of a future generation of Mallainas. Doña Matilda Mallaina was, for one of her race, rather pale-complexioned; her eyes were large and full of tender expression, and her hair, which fell in loose, abundant ringlets around her Madonna-like face, was inclined to escape the controlling bands, and toy amorously with the soft bloom of her rose-tinged cheeks. The young people were desperately

in love with one another; they were never tired of each other's society; indeed, it may with truth be said that they were never happy except when together, and neither of them possessed a single thought, hope, wish, or inclination which was not mutually shared.

The house in which they resided in Belorado was at once ancient, handsome, and commodious. It lay far back from the general town, hidden from all intruding eyes by a wealth of luxuriant foliage, multitudinous flowers, and arborous retreats, in the midst of vast and most delightfully planted grounds.

Doña Mallaina's boudoir looked out upon a long orange grove and a grey stone terrace, adorned with several choice statuettes and fountains.

It was very pleasant to roam here in the moonlight, with the trees all silvered, and the blossoms gemmed with dew; when all was silence but for the soft voice of the occasional breeze, and the strange melancholy sound of rippling water. It was very pleasant to dream here through the long summer days, shaded from the burning beams of the gorgeous sun, with every bower breathing the mingled perfume of flowers, and blazing with the rich, indescribable harmonies of colour produced by a thousand heavy blossoms, and with every tree a sanctuary for the choir of feathered songsters, who poured into the enchanted solitudes a flood of sweet, melodious utterance.

This was indeed a lovers' paradise, and no more fitting inmates than Don Mallaina and his beautiful young bride could possibly have been found.

Day and night with them were but succeeding trances of perpetual bliss.

They were ever in each other's arms, drinking the nectarous potion which Eros bestows upon his disciples. Life and love were to them but one, as they drew from lovers' lips the wild honey that fired their blood with burning ardours, and soothed them subsequently with the quiet dews of mingled slumber.

But this state of paradisial happiness was not fated to continue for long.

The desolation of the paradise, and the ruin of its inmates, were facts shortly to be accomplished by the joint villainy of a hardened and abandoned ruffian, and the folly of a light-witted, unthinking woman.

Doña Matilda had amongst her other private domestics a favourite maid, Teresa, by name, who was a bright, attractive-looking girl, whose shallow brains, however, were always absorbed in sentimental reflections and aspirations.

Teresa would sit for hours sighing for a knightly lover, or praying for him, wondering what he would be like, should he ever appear. What would be the manner of his address, and so on *ad infinitum*. She disclaimed a lover in her own walk in life, and longed for the prince of the fable to descend to earth to woo her, marry her, and make her his princess; when she would reign as queen of beauty over an ever-swelling train of amorous and adoring courtiers.

This is how Teresa's dream was fulfilled:

One evening, her master and mistress being out, she sat by an open window with some fine needlework resting idle on her lap, while her mad-cap thoughts were far away in that particular land of visions where princes marry serving-maids, and ducal coronets are cast at the feet of grisettes, and are always to be had for the asking.

Suddenly, Teresa heard footsteps moving amongst the trees below the window.

The moon was up, but the trees were in the shadow, and it was impossible to discern from Teresa's position anyone who might be hidden in the darkened foliage. For a moment the girl was alarmed, and deliberated whether or no it would be advisable to summon some of the men-servants.

"LEAD ME TO YOUR MISTRESS'S CHAMBER."

She was about to put this plan into execution, when she was surprised to hear the low thrum of a guitar just beneath her window.

She stopped, and presently, to a hushed, melodious accompaniment, the words of a love song, sung in a man's rich voice, which trembled with feeling and emotion, were wafted up to her now excited ears.

A love song! A strange voice!

To whom could the passionate words be addressed?

To her mistress?

No! that were impossible. Who then?

Why, to Teresa herself!

The girl, trembling with excitement, went to the window and looked out—the lower casement was open—to see who the serenader could be.

She saw a tall man, elegantly attired, with a rich Spanish cloak hanging from his broad shoulders, and jewels sparkling on his fingers, playing a guitar, and singing in a fine cultivated voice, that thrilled the frail heart of Teresa as it had never been thrilled before.

The stranger no sooner saw Teresa's face appear at the open window than he threw himself upon his knees, and doffed his wide slouch hat in the courtly manner of an ancient cavalier.

"Señora," he said, in low, earnest accents, "do I offend you? May the mortal sing to the goddess?"

Teresa had never in her life been addressed in such terms, although she had never ceased to long for the stilted periods of a Spanish gentleman's love declaration.

Her dream was fulfilled. She was entranced.

"You do not offend me, sir, although I cannot say that I know you," she answered in affected tones.

"Will you not say that I please you?"

"Ah, you ask too much."

"Grant me this favour, this boon, to one who loves you?"

"Loves me! What nonsense," laughed Teresa, highly delighted. "Why, you do not even know me."

"I have seen you often."

"Where?"

"In Belorado."

"When?"

"Often. I wait for you and watch you."

"Indeed, and who are you?"

"I? A gentleman."

"Your name?"

"No matter for the present."

From this Teresa argued he could be nothing less than a nobleman.

The stranger blew her a kiss.

She laughed softly and blew him one in return.

The stranger shortly afterwards withdrew, but returned on the succeeding night.

This time, however, he did not serenade Teresa, which was fortunate, because Don Mallaina and Doña Matilda happened to be at home, and should the previous night's musical performance have been repeated, Teresa and her lover would certainly have been discovered.

He vowed his love again in most passionate terms, threw a bouquet of the choicest flowers into the window, and then silently glided away.

This was repeated night after night, and at every interview Teresa and the stranger became more intimate. The lover grew bolder in his declarations, and the lady rewarded his ardent overtures with protestations and glances of like order.

One night the stranger clambered up into her room, and smothered her glowing face in his fervent kisses.

The next night he did the same thing, but with the slight difference that Teresa had expected him, and had prepared a suitable banquet for her disguised prince.

This time he did not leave her room until morning.

Now, let us see who this mysterious personage was whom Teresa had admitted into her mistress's house.

He told the girl that his name was Don Reigo da Costa, that he had, unfortunately, been implicated in a Carlist plot, and therefore his identity must remain unknown to everybody but her. He also told her that on the conclusion of the present political business, which, for the time, necessitated his sojourn in Belorado, he would marry her, and take her to France, where, he said, he owned extensive estates and property.

In reality this pretended Don was one Pedro Carlo, a notorious criminal and malefactor, for whom the Spanish police were at present arduously searching.

Carlo had been in his time a thief, a forger, a cut-throat, and a brigand; he had been imprisoned twice, once serving his full time, and on the other occasion escaping from the law's detention in a most daring manner.

To put the matter shortly, at the time of which we write, Carlo was regarded by the Spanish authorities as the most dangerous ruffian alive in Spain.

Strangely enough, the scoundrel had a perfect genius for disguise of any kind, particularly that of a gentleman, for which character his handsome face and figure, combined with his easy grace of manner, fitted him admirably.

He had been driven to Belorado as the most remote spot from the scene of his latest crime, upon the proceeds of which he could afford to rest for some considerable period.

But Pedro Carlo hated idleness; he longed for adventure, and was ever seeking business which, in his experienced hands, he could turn to profitable account.

He had not been in Belorado a day before he spotted the beautiful residence and the extensive grounds belonging to the Mallainas. He inquired about the Mallaina family from the town gossips, who vied with each other in exaggerating the riches of their noble neighbour and patron.

"All here," reflected Pedro, "points to wealth. This house must contain a fortune. The question is now how to gain admittance."

Pedro had made up his mind to rob Don Mallaina's house, and he at once began carefully scrutinising the exterior of the premises, and seeking an opportunity for becoming intimate with the inmates.

He noticed Teresa several times in the town, and having learnt from several sources what a light-witted, romantic girl she was, he determined to gain entrance into the house through the medium of the serving-maid; hence the serenades and the sham love-making.

Also, Pedro Carlo was killing two birds with one stone, for Teresa was undoubtedly an attractive girl, and if there was one thing on earth which this villain loved above robbery and violence, it was an intrigue.

Pedro frequently boasted that he had ruined more women than any other man in Spain, and it was not long before Teresa was added to the already extensive list of his victims.

But Pedro Carlo never lost his sense of business, and while he paid nocturnal visits to Teresa's chamber, he took the opportunity of getting a pretty accurate knowledge of the house's interior.

After he had amused himself with Teresa for some ten days, he began to tire of her, and to hunger to put his main scheme into active execution.

One evening Teresa told him that Don Mallaina would on the following morning set out to pay an uncle of his a visit, which would last some days.

The Don's uncle resided at some distance, and Mallaina was taking with him his retinue of servants, partly out of compliment to his relation, and partly to safeguard himself from the many robbers and desperate characters who infested the roads between Belorado and his uncle's palace.

Pedro learned from the foolish lips of Teresa that Doña Matilda did not feel strong enough to accompany her husband, and would remain behind with her maid, an old man-servant, and a second female domestic. Pedro judged the time to be peculiarly propitious for his purpose.

"Is it not dangerous," said he to Teresa, "for three women to sleep alone with all these valuables about them? The robbers in the country are a pest."

"Oh, for that, love, Doña Matilda must look out. Everything of value in this house is locked up in the strongroom. Doña Matilda carries the key about herself attached to her chatelaine."

Pedro left her, highly delighted with the news he had gleaned. He determined to put his plan into execution on the ensuing night. In the morning half the town turned out to see Don Mallaina ride away with his retinue. He would be absent, it was said, three days.

Doña Mallaina bade her husband an affectionate adieu, dried her tears very bravely, and spent the rest of the day in Teresa's company, doing fine needlework.

She retired to rest early, and Teresa, glad at last to be at liberty, ran to welcome her expected lover.

Sure enough, he was waiting for her under the window, and no sooner did he see her face appear at the open casement than he swung himself up the creeper to her side. Teresa threw her arms passionately around him, and kissed him on the lips.

Something hurt her bosom.

It was the handle of a dagger stuck in Pedro's breast.

"What is that weapon for?" asked the girl.

"You will see presently," answered Pedro Carlo, with a queer smile.

Teresa had never seen her paramour in such a strange mood before. He seized her wrist in a grip of iron.

"Lead me to your mistress's chamber," he whispered.

"What? Are you mad?"

"Do not dare to disobey me."

He touched the handle of the dagger significantly.

Suddenly an awful terror possessed Teresa. A terrible light broke in upon her poor deluded brain. Pedro, her disguised nobleman, was no more than a robber and a cut-throat. She would have shrieked aloud for help, but Carlo, wily as ever, saw the motion of her lips, and with his left hand covered her mouth and stifled the scream in her throat. The girl struggled desperately to free herself. Her teeth met in the thick part of his hand, and an exclamation of pain was forced from the ruffian's lips.

He waited for no more, but pulled out his dagger from its sheath, and with a dexterous twist of his hand, drove the keen blade deep into the unhappy girl's heart.

With an expiring spasm, she sank to the floor, a bleeding corpse.

"So far so good," muttered Pedro, as he kicked the body out of his path, and with silent, agile steps crept to the door. He opened it, and found himself on a landing facing a flight of stairs that led down into the hall of the mansion.

He remembered Teresa had said that the other domestics slept in the basement; also that she had frequently cautioned

him against noisy love-making, because her mistress's room was not far distant, and there was a possibility of being overheard. Therefore he judged that Doña Matilda's room was on the present landing. He saw two doors, and determined to try the one farthest from Teresa's room. He crept next the wall along the landing, which in reality would have been more accurately described as a corridor. He turned the handle of the door gently, and, with an adroit push, opened it sufficiently to admit his slim body.

He found himself in a large and sumptuously furnished apartment; on all sides were evidences of wealth and luxury, and at the farther end stood a large four-post bed, heavily curtained.

The toilette table and the wardrobes all spoke plainly to the effect that the room had a female occupant.

Pedro chuckled grimly. He was in great luck to-night.

He crept silently across the room to the toilette table.

Where was the chatelaine? Where was the key of the strong-room? The devil! It was nowhere to be seen. Pedro turned and crept as silently as ever to the bed.

Covered his face with his hands and leaped over the edge.

The moon was streaming into the room, and showed to the scoundrel's gaze a picture so beautiful and touching that it is not to be painted in words.

Doña Matilda lay asleep in the silk-curtained bed. The coverlet had fallen from her, and disclosed to Pedro's burning eyes the flowing outlines of her exquisite form. Her lovely raven curls lay in disorder all about her pale, smiling face, buried in the downy haven of the smooth white pillows. There were two tears on her long, silken eyelashes that swept the rosy bloom of her cheeks, but her innocent lips were parted in a smile of the most angelic sweetness.

One arm was negligently raised above her head, and Pedro noticed its perfect symmetry and the pinkness of the disclosed palm.

She had evidently been restless in her sleep, and her bosom lay bare to the lewd gaze of the gluttonous ruffian, who feasted his throbbing eyes upon the spectacle that, beautiful and innocent as it was, stirred up within his recreant breast the most violent and atrocious passions. Around Doña Matilda's neck was suspended a silk cord, upon which hung a large key.

Pedro bent over the girl's sleeping form, and with one twist of his dagger severed the key from the cord. She sighed in her sleep, and her bosom, heaving, touched his hand. Pedro trembled like a child. As he crept from the room he noticed that the key was quite warm from the contact of Matilda's breast.

Pedro kissed the key.

Now where was the strong-room?

He would try the room next to Doña Matilda's.

It was locked. He inserted the key, and the lock turned easily.

He was in the strong-room, amongst the jewels and the heirlooms of the Mallainas. Around his body before embarking upon this enterprise, he had wound a long sack, or bag, like a belt. This he at once undid, and for the next half-hour was busy filling the receptacle with the choicest and most precious wares he could lay his hands upon.

All the time he was stuffing the sack he was thinking of the sleeping mistress of the house.

The beauty of the scene he had witnessed intoxicated his senses. His hands trembled—not for lack of nerve, for such experiences as the present were not novel to Pedro Carlo—but he felt his whole being vibrate with a terrible desire to embrace the lovely girl sleeping in the adjoining room.

The sack was filled.

Pedro bound up its mouth with fine rope, and then, slinging it on to his back, crept back into Teresa's room. The body of the murdered serving-maid lay just as he had left it, huddled up in a corner, and bleeding profusely.

Pedro did not deign to notice it, but at once went to the bed, tore off one of the sheets, hooked the loaded sack on to one end, and lowered it out of the open window.

All was done now!

Should he follow the sack and make good his escape?

No; the night's work of horror was not yet complete. He must return to Doña Matilda. He must satisfy the cravings of his lust at any cost.

He found her as before, sleeping calmly.

Pedro had the eye of a connoisseur. He appreciated each flowing line, each smooth and swelling curve, each delicate tint that gleamed upon his burning vision.

Doña Matilda woke with a start.

A man was lying by her side, had clasped her in his arms, was stifling her with fiery kisses.

The pearly sweat broke out upon her brow.

She could not cry or scream—the man's lips were pressed on to hers—her distress was inarticulate.

The man's eyes were like balls of glowing fire that scorched with their burning gaze her own terror-stricken orbs.

A terrible struggle ensued.

With the strength of despair, with a strength that she had never before in her life possessed, Doña Matilda battled with her assailant.

Struggling and fighting, they slipped from the bed and fell in a disordered, writhing heap on to the floor.

"Your life or your silence!" hissed Pedro into her ear.

She shook her head.

"Will you give in?" he repeated.

She shook her head and renewed her struggles with such force that the villain actually felt her slipping from his grasp.

She actually gave a stifled scream. Pedro saw that she was unconquerable. It was now too late to retreat—she must die!

He pulled out his dagger and showed it her.

She did not flinch.

"Will you give in?" he whispered again.

She shook her head.

"Then die, fool!" he muttered, and drove the already blood-stained blade deep into her quivering bosom. She sank back with a single groan. Suddenly Pedro heard a step upon the stairs, a man's step, hastily ascending.

He sprang from the corpse and fled from the room.

Standing before him, wrapt in a traveller's cloak, was Don Mallaina.

The don started back with a cry of horror.

Pedro felt for his dagger. He had left it in his victim.

Quick as lightning, he sprang on the don and hurled him down the stairs.

The murderer dashed into Teresa's room, and sprang with a single bound through the window. He seized the sack, which, although it contained many valuables, was in no way heavy, and quickly disappeared amongst the trees.

* * * * * *

Four years have passed since the preceding tragedy.

The scene is a remote district in Spain, wild, mountainous and sparsely inhabited.

Pedro Carlo, tired, jaded, foot-sore and despairing, for he had been hunted all day by bloodhounds, threw himself down under a furze-bush to sleep.

The spot was one only known to a few outlaws, and judged by them inaccessible, except by the secret pathway which they alone knew. It was bounded on the right by a deep precipice, and upon the left by a thick wood, through which it was said that no trail could be followed, no hunted animal tracked. Since the murder of Doña Matilda Pedro Carlo had been incessantly hunted by Don Mallaina, day after day, week after week, month after month.

The don had sworn that he would never rest until he had slain his beloved wife's assassin. The clue to the author of her death had been given him by the dagger found in her body, upon which Pedro's name had been boastfully engraved, and from that moment to this—four years after—the don had unceasingly hunted the ruffian. Several times he had come close to capturing him, but never had Pedro seemed so surely in his grasp as he had done this day.

The don and his companions halted on the other side of the wood which separated them from Pedro, who was now comfortably asleep in the furze-bush.

The dogs had lost the scent.

The pursuers were mad with anger. Was Pedro to escape again?

"You say," said the don to his principal retainer, "that you are certain he entered the wood?"

"Absolutely, your honour."

"What lies on the farther side of the forest?"

"A plateau, which is, in turn, skirted by a steep precipice."

"So that there is no way of his escaping except by the wood?"

"None whatever; but that he may do at some point we are not watching."

"Can we not follow him through the forest?"

"Impossible! There is only one pathway into its interior, and that is known to no one but a few robbers."

"Is there any way of reaching the foot of the precipice?"

"Certainly! It would take us two hours to reach it from here."

"Guide me to it at once. You others wait here, and in two hours' time set the wood alight in as many places as possible. I intend the forest to be burnt down."

Three hours after this conversation Pedro Carlo dreamt he was choking. He awoke in a sweat of fear. Was it a dream or a nightmare? The heavens were burnished with the reflected rays of a thousand flames. The whole forest was on fire. Tongues of quivering flame leapt up, one after another, in every direction.

The forest roared and crackled and blazed. It was as light as morning.

Suddenly the whole truth flashed upon Pedro's brain.

He was caught! Trapped at last! The don was burning the rat out of the hole!

He howled and screamed in his impotent rage. The heat was already fearful; he felt his cheeks scorched and his limbs were dripping with sweat.

Gust after gust of wind carried on the rolling furnace of leaping flames, nearer, nearer, nearer! The sparks showered down upon his head.

He turned and fled to the edge of the precipice.

He must leap for life. He would probably be killed, but he preferred being broken on the rocks to being slowly scorched and burnt to death. He covered his face with his hands, and, with one despairing cry, leapt over the edge into the darkness below. He fell a maimed, bruised, broken bundle of bones, not fifty yards from where the don awaited him. The blood was gushing from his face, but he opened his eyes and saw Don Mallaina standing over him.

The don held a dagger in his hand.

"Your own weapon, Pedro Carlo," he said. "I return it to you!"

He plunged it deep into the murderer's heart.

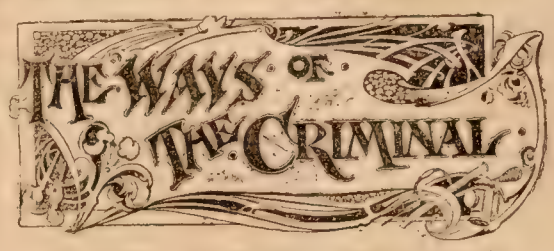
Three weeks afterwards Don Mallaina was found dead in his bed.

He had shot himself.

From the written statement he left behind the main facts of the terrible tragedy we have related have been drawn, and for the rest we are indebted to the courtesy of the Belorado police, to whose records we have been given free access.

He Took the Lot.

SERJEANT DAVY was once remonstrated with at the circuit mess for accepting silver from a client, and so disgracing the profession, whereupon he answered: "I took silver because I could not get gold, but I took every farthing the fellow had in the world, and I hope you don't call that disgracing the profession."



XX.—THE STORY OF SOME CLEVER FORGERIES.

WITHIN the past year the authorities of the Bank of England and the detectives who are specially told off to deal with the skilful bands of forgers who are known to be at work, both in England and on the Continent, have had a very anxious time of it. Our readers will doubtless remember how two bold and gigantic plots to flood the country with forged "fivers" were frustrated by the police. Some day we will tell the story of those conspiracies, and of the smart detective work which led up to the capture of the criminals.

Here it is our purpose to tell of some forgers who, whilst achieving a measure of success, never attempted so bold a coup as those referred to above.

One of the most troublesome and expert forgers who ever came within the ken of the authorities at Scotland Yard was a man known as Charles Howard, who, in 1884, was arrested for a forged will and next-of-kin swindle. Howard was a genius in his way, and certainly a prince amongst swindlers. When he was most wanted in London his portrait and description were to be found in almost every police office in Europe and the United States, and scores of detectives were on the look-out for him. On the Continent Howard was known as Count Von Howard, or else Von Howardi, whilst in England he adopted as many names as suited his schemes.

His pet swindle, and the one out of which he made most money, was that in which he posed as a matrimonial agent. He would by hook or by crook introduce himself to a man with a fair amount of money and little brains, and offer for a consideration in notes and gold to introduce him to a wealthy Australian heiress, who was anxious to marry a young Englishman. Of course the heiress existed only in his fertile brain, but, nevertheless, the imaginary young lady brought plenty of grist to his mill. Once when the story got into the papers, with the comment that the heiress did not exist, Howard had the cheek to write to the Press, assuming for the moment a colonial appointment, and in that guise declared that the heiress was a very real and matter-of-fact young lady.

His forged will and next-of-kin swindle, however, set the seal to his fame as a criminal. Nothing could have been more impudent in its design and execution. In many well-known newspapers he inserted an advertisement which read, "To all whom it may concern," and went on to state that a Mr. Clarke had died in Australia and left a large fortune to be divided among his next-of-kin, who were believed to be living in whatever counties the paper happened to circulate. Many people anxious to succeed to a fortune (and who is not?) replied to the advertisement. It was a bad time for the Clarke family, and it was really surprising to find how many persons of that name had relatives in Australia. It looked as if all the Clarkes except the little ones had at one

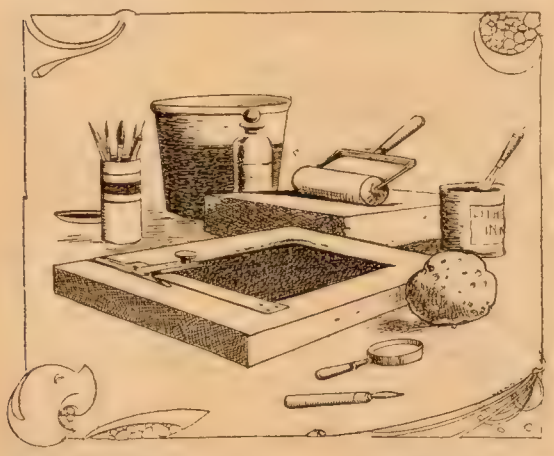
The "Scientific Investigator."
Sketched during his trial at the Old Bailey.

time or another emigrated to the island continent. Those who were foolish enough to write to the advertiser received in answer to their letter a request to remit the sum of fifty shillings to cover the cost of inquiry and other fees. The letter artfully hinted that the applicant seemed to have a claim to the estate, and went on to say that the instructions in the will set forth that the money, which amounted to over £100,000, was to be divided amongst the first thirty-five people who sent in their names, provided they were related to the testator and were in humble circumstances.

As proof that "Mr. Clarke" had died, Howard had written out what purported to be a copy of the lettering on his tombstone, and this document was declared to be true by someone whose signature was appended. This someone was no doubt Howard, for he was an expert penman. It was a clever scheme altogether, and for many months Howard lived like a prince on the proceeds of his swindle. Then he was dropped on by the police, and died in Holloway Prison whilst awaiting trial. It cannot be said that the news of his death caused many tears to be shed.

Another forger whom the police were glad to see under lock and key is just concluding a term of ten years' penal servitude. Indeed, he may be at liberty before these lines are in print—that is, if he has behaved himself whilst he has been wearing the dress of a convict. This criminal, who called himself a "scientific investigator" (a high-sounding synonym for "forger"), lived in great style in the West-end of London. Of genteel appearance, with a close-cropped Vandyke beard, always dressed in the height of fashion, and particularly well groomed, our forger took a house just off a well-known square, and laid in a forging plant which was sufficient to fill a large-sized pantechnicon. The forger did not attempt to deal with Bank of England notes, but went in for printing French billets de banque and Russian rouble notes. When arrested by the police, he stated that he was not a criminal forger but a "scientific investigator," whose aim was to invent a note which could not be imitated by persons of a dishonest turn of mind. It was an ingenious defence, but the jury found themselves unable to swallow it, and the ten years' incarceration was the result of their incredulity.

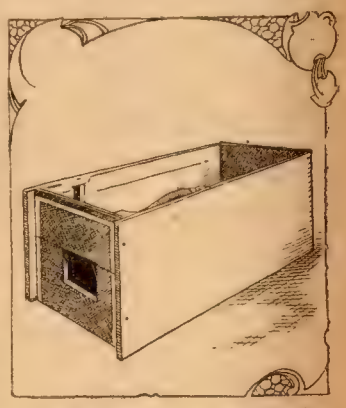
After the verdict was given the prisoner protested that all along he was only endeavouring to find out a method of outwitting forgers. The judge, however, expressed no opinion, but told the man in the dock that if ever he could prove his bona fides he would see that the Home Secretary was informed. It is only necessary to add that the official at Whitehall has not yet been troubled with the case. Amongst the prisoner's possessions were enlarged drawings of French bank notes. The real notes had been photographed to half-a-dozen times their size, and then the lines had been drawn over with a waterproof ink. After this the photo had been bleached out, only the black lines remaining.



[Gelatine plate mounted on board; litho ink, slab, and roller; water crock; sponge; chemical solution, etc.; used for printing forgeries of Rouble notes.

This could then be photographed back to the proper size (a clear and well-defined print being obtained), and "zinco blocks," such as our illustrations are printed from, made from the photos. These "blocks" were remarkably fine etchings, the only blemishes being on the faces of the symbolical figures, which were not quite perfect. The fault, however, was in the drawing, not the etching. This, however, was scarcely noticeable; indeed, it was not discovered until the notes had been thoroughly examined by experts. The "scientific investigator," however, did not confine his investigations to bank notes.

The stuff seized at his residence included imitations of railway certificates, bonds, and bills of lading, all of which had been cleverly forged. The police, in fact, were astonished at the amount of stuff they had to cart away. The mute witnesses against the prisoner completely filled a large room at the Old Bailey, the assortment including, in addition to the notes and plates already referred to, all the chemicals and materials used for photographers' lithographic stones, which had been treated in a peculiar manner, so as to imitate water-marks, negatives, cameras of various sizes, enlarging lenses, and drawing materials. It was evident that much time had been spent in the preparation of the lithographic stones, for the imitation of water-marks is the biggest stumbling block in the way of the forger.



A cigar-box camera in the possession of the police.

In the late sixties the Russian police sought the assistance of Scotland Yard in an endeavour to unravel the mystery of some forged rouble notes. The men at the Yard were not long in dropping upon the gang of forgers and seizing their plant. This consisted of a gelatine plate, on which was engraved a facsimile of a rouble note and all the apparatus for printing the forgeries. The printing plate was a home-made affair. The gelatine, as will be seen in our illustration, is fastened down by means of a strip of metal and a common window-catch. The notes, which the police also seized, were really wonderful specimens of the forger's art, and some of them deceived the officials at the Russian Consulate even after they knew that the imitations were in existence, and were on the look-out for them.

The relics of this case are now kept in the museum at Scotland Yard, where, too, can be seen some of the articles seized by the police in connection with what is known in criminal annals as the "Ti Kroner Case." These souvenirs include a cigar-box ingeniously fashioned so as to form a camera, a broken negative of a Ti Kroner note, and also a photograph of one of these notes on a piece of boxwood. The latter was evidently all ready for engraving. It was found in the possession of a man who was arrested on quite a different charge, and when asked to explain why he had it he told an ingenious story. On the note three circles had been cut, and on the wood in pencil in the circles were the words "£10 watch here," "Watch here," "£10 clock here." It was said the prisoner expressed his intention to use the notes for advertising purposes. The spaces cut from the notes were to be filled in with pictures of watches and clocks.

The notes, he went on, were to be dropped around "promiscus" like for people to pick up, and, thinking they had "struck ile," discover that they only possessed a smart advertisement. Despite the ingenious explanation, however, the possessor of the forgery was sent to penal servitude for 20 years, a bit on account of the forgery, and the rest for threatening to blow up old ladies on their own doorsteps if they did not send him money. The blowing-up was to be accomplished with dynamite placed on the aforesaid mats.

Flash bank-notes rather than forged specimens are well-known in England. "The flash" is usually the stock-in-trade of the confidence man and racecourse swindler. These notes look at a first glance very like the real thing. They have the same crisp, crackling rustle, and are printed in exactly the same style as the real "fiver." They are covered with the familiar scrolls and flourishes, and the lettering is as follows:

"Bank of Engraving. I promise to Engrave and Print in Letterpress on Demand for the Sum of Five Pounds in the first style of Art, or forfeit the above sum. London, April 29, 1840. For Self and Co., Bank of Engraving, J Duck. £ Five."

These notes are used to inspire confidence, and the swindlers who use them generally carry a roll, the wrapper of which is, when they can afford it, a real fiver. In this connection a confidence man turned the tables on himself one day, much to the delight of one or two men who had tumbled to his game and were watching him. It was in a colliery town, and the swindlers (for there were two of them) were doing the usual swagger before working one of their tricks. To show that they were men of money, this pair used to frequent the bars of public-houses, and ostentatiously producing a "flash" note, which the unsophisticated onlookers supposed to be a real one, apply it to the gas and light a cigar with it. From frequent practice the swindlers became careless, and on this particular day the man with the "wad of duce flimsies" lit his cigar with the only real note in his possession. It is just as well to draw a veil over the scene which followed the discovery of the disaster.

Begging-letter writers are expert forgers. One of them has frequently come under the notice of the police. His mode of writing begging-letters was very different to that adopted by many of his contemporaries in the business, and had the merit of being decidedly smart. This man, who for his pains was rewarded with a long term of imprisonment, kept a number of books, in which he kept himself up-to-date with the peerage and aristocracy. Names, dates, addresses, etc., were accurately entered, and occasionally details as to age and other circumstances were added. He was an expert writer, and had numberless different styles of inscription. In addition, he worked the changes on the writings with various different-coloured inks. His game was to write to anyone out of whom he thought he could get money. To a soldier he would address himself as "An old army man," to a stockbroker he would write and say that "Years before he had been on the market," whilst to a sailor his statement was that he had served in such-and-such a year on board H.M.S. Something-or-Other, on which the officer addressed was then engaged.

This, of course, is the method of all begging-letter writers, but the man under notice went even further. He would write to clergymen on some subject or other, obtain a reply from

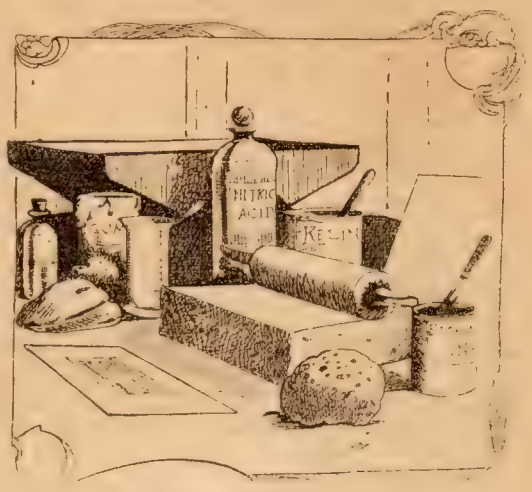
Details from "The Scientific Investigator's" wet plate plant.
Sketched at the Old Bailey.

the reverend gentlemen, and then in a close imitation of the latter's writing he would draw up a petition, headed with the name of the parish to which the clergyman was connected. One of these ran as follows:

"Parish of Streatham,
"County of Surrey.

"These are to certify that Mrs. Anne Clarke (widow) carried on business as laundress in this parish for several years, and has hitherto supported a large family in respectability.

"On the afternoon of Saturday, Dec. 14 last, while Mrs. Clarke was delivering clean linen with her horse and van near the Streatham railway station, the horse took fright at the whistle of a passing train, and started off at a furious pace, and coming in contact with a coal waggon, the horse was killed, the van dashed to pieces, and her eldest son (sixteen years of age) was thrown from the van and received such injury as caused compound fracture of the right thigh, and now lies in St. Thomas's Hospital in a dan-



Zinco etching plant of the type used in some recent big note forgeries.
The above shows the rocking trough or bath for etching. The acid measure, leather roller, ink, slab, sponges, etc., with zinc plate ready for work.

gerous state, whereby Mrs. Clarke has sustained a severe loss, estimated at £45.

"Knowing Mrs. Clarke as a respectable and industrious widow, with a family of five children depending on her for support, I recommend her case to the notice of a few benevolent neighbours to enable her to follow her occupation as heretofore; trusting it will come under their notice with that eye of sympathy which it so much merits."

This document was signed by the forger, who imitated the genuine signature of an official, and added £1 by the side of it. These petitions he sold for from three to four shillings each to anyone who cared to work the swindle, or else the forger went on the lay himself.

After getting a genuine signature and subscription appended to the document, he would fill in in different writings a few bogus names. Thus he reaped a fairly prosperous living, hawking these petitions about and collecting funds for the distressed widow.

There is a man in the East End of London who lives by writing and selling begging-letters, and writing to order blood-curdling accounts of accidents that never happened for cripples who are only sham cripples.

English, Scotch, or Common Sense.

MR. JOHN CLARKE, an eminent Scotch advocate, was arguing at the bar of the House of Lords in a Scotch appeal, and, speaking in the broadest of broad Scotch, he cleverly clinched an argument, and added:

"That's the whole thing in plain English, ma lorrdds."

Whereupon Lord Eldon remarked:

"You mean in plain Scotch, Mr. Clarke."

The latter wittily answered:

"Nae maitter! In plain common-sense, ma lords, an' that's the same in a' languages, we ken weel eneuch."

A CULPRIT in Dublin had once committed a trifling offence, for which the judge pronounced the sentence that the offender be flogged from the Bank to the Quay. The prisoner, hastily interrupting the judge, said, "Thank you, my lord; you have done your worst!" Judge: "And back again."

THE POISONING OF WILLIAM HIGGINS

MURDERED BY HIS ADOPTED CHILD.

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child."
—SHAKESPEARE, "King Lear," Act I., Scene 4.

JUST outside the ancient and renowned city of Coventry, famous in history as the scene of Lady Godiva's ride and Peeping Tom's punishment, there lived, in the year 1831, in a small but pretty thatched cottage, on the road to Foleshill, a kind-hearted old man and young girl, whose neat figure, clean and smart appearance, rosy cheeks and pretty face, had made her an attraction to many of the young men of Coventry and the neighbourhood, several of whom would have made love to her, and in time married her, had she given them any encouragement or permitted their attentions.

When quite a child her parents had died and left her alone in the world, and her uncle—her father's brother—found her a home and brought her up as his own. The name of this old man was William Higgins, and that of his niece, Mary Ann Higgins. As the girl advanced in years she became almost indispensable in her uncle's house, for on his return from his work he always found his home "swept and garnished," and his meals were prepared punctually and spread appetisingly. The uncle had but one fear, and that was that, amongst the many young men who cast admiring glances on his bonny niece, one of them would some day take her from him, and he would be left in his old age alone and desolate. At the same time he had not the slightest wish to unduly influence her in her choice of a husband, but was only anxious that she should be happy, and he often said that the only way she could be happy was to have the one she really and truly loved.

Out of the many candidates for the young woman's hand and heart, there was one to whom Mary Ann seemed more partial than to any of the others. His name was Edward Clarke, a young man, twenty-one years of age, who had not long before completed his apprenticeship to the watchmaking trade. Her uncle did not look unkindly on the match, and seemed rather to take to the young fellow, perhaps because Clarke seemed not unwilling to make the cottage his home, and the old fellow, who was greatly afraid of having to part with his housekeeper-niece, believed that they might all three live very happily together at the cottage.

He had a good balance to his credit in the bank, which he thought would be useful to him in his old days; he owned the cottage in which he and Mary Ann lived, as well as three others adjoining it, and which brought him in a sum of twelve shillings per week. He was still employed at a large watch-case manufactory in the city, earned a good wage, and altogether was in very comfortable, not to say affluent, circumstances.

Mary Ann had not yet decided whether to bestow her affections on young Clarke, as there was another eligible and desirable suitor who was anxious to supplant the young watchmaker. His name was Henry Neville, an industrious and well-to-do farmer, who lived at an old farmhouse, just left him by his father, at Bedworth. His prospects were certainly much better than those of Clarke, as, being the only son, he had come into full possession of a somewhat extensive farm, and he urged on Mary that, if she married him, she would be mistress of her own house, owner of the farm, and have a pony and trap to ride in.

But at length she decided to give her hand where her heart was, and she promised Edward Clarke that she would marry him, and nobody else but him, and that she was willing to become his wife as soon as he wished her to do so. And so, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, in the year 1831, the clergyman at St. Paul's Church at Foleshill, after having recited the Creed, stood up on the altar steps, and in a loud and distinct voice said:

"I publish the banns of marriage between Edward Clarke, bachelor, and Mary Ann Higgins, spinster, both of this parish. If any of you know any just cause or impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it. This is the first time of asking."

The news quickly spread, many a young girl hurrying home from church on that Sunday with the information that Mary Ann Higgins was going to be married to Edward Clarke, and that Harry Neville was in church (which was the fact) and heard the banns published for the first time, and that he looked terribly put out about it.

"Oh, my poor uncle!"

On the Sunday following the banns were again published, and during the ensuing weeks preparations were being made at the cottage for the wedding. One evening, however, during the week, the poor old man was found very ill in bed, and Mary Ann ran into the house of their next-door neighbour wringing her hands and crying, "Oh, do come directly, for my poor uncle is dying."

The neighbours immediately entered the cottage and found William Higgins writhing on the bed, evidently in great agony, and vomiting in the most violent fashion. Two women who lived close by, Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Green, did all they could for the poor man, and as Mary Ann was of no use whatever, being completely prostrated with grief, they sent off a messenger for the doctor, with instructions for him to come at once. In the meantime the old man again vomited freely, and one of the women remarked that there seemed something very queer in his sickness, and it looked to her as if it had been caused by poison. Mrs. Green then said to the niece:

"What has your uncle had to eat, Mary Ann?"

"Nothing that I know of," answered the girl, "except a little pea soup for his dinner when he came home."

"Did you have any of it?" asked the woman.

"Yes," was the reply. "I had a basin of it as well, and it has not hurt me."

"Is there any left?" said Mrs. Moore.

"Yes," said Mary Ann. "There is some in the pot."

In less than ten minutes the old man died, before the arrival of medical assistance, and Mary Ann flung herself upon a bed in another room, crying, "Oh, my poor uncle—he's dead—he's dead!"

Her sweetheart, who was in the house at the time, calmed the girl as well as he could, having followed her to the room into which she had retired on learning that her uncle was dead.

Meanwhile, the neighbours had found a couple of basins containing a small quantity of soup, evidently the remains of what the deceased and his niece had partaken of for dinner. It was noticed that there was a sediment of a whitish-brown colour in one of the basins whilst the other appeared perfectly clear. There was also the same whitish-brown colour in the ejecta which had recently been thrown up by the old man.

As the two women suspected that the deceased had died of poisoning, they took the precaution of locking the soup basins in the cupboard. Soon afterwards the doctor arrived, and having examined the old man, at once gave it as his opinion that he had died of poison. He, however, would not commit himself to any definite statement until a post-mortem examination had been made. The news of the suspicious death spread rapidly, for Higgins was a man who was esteemed by all who knew him.

Of course, there was an inquest on the old gentleman, and before that took place, there was much curiosity and interest manifested as to the cause of his death. He was of a placid, contented and peaceable nature, and as nobody thought him the kind of man to commit suicide, there was a strong belief in the neighbourhood that he had been wilfully poisoned, but by whom the poison had been administered it was, just then, impossible to surmise.

The attention of Mary Ann Higgins was called to the two basins of soup, and she was asked if she could explain the reason of the difference in the colour of the soup in them. She said, "Oh, yes; one was made on Saturday, and the other on the Monday; and one I thickened with flour, and the other with oatmeal."

"You have lost your best friend now, Mary Ann," said Mrs. Green.

"Yes," replied the girl, "he has been a good friend to me, and I don't know how I should have got on if I had not been going to be married. The wedding is fixed for next week, so I shall have to go into black, and then take the black off for the day, and then put the black on again after the wedding is over. I could not be married in black, for they say it's bad luck."

Mrs. Green suggested that the wedding should be put off for a time, but Mary Ann would not hear of such a thing, and insisted that it could not be postponed owing to her condition.

The police, who were notified as soon as it was determined by the doctor that a coroner's inquest was necessary, took charge of the case, and gave strict injunctions that nothing in the house was to be disturbed on any account, and also intimated their wish that Mary Ann should not leave the premises, as she might be wanted to answer certain questions.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO GO TO THE STATION FOR?"

There was a post-mortem examination made during the day, the stomach and its contents being taken away by the doctors for analysis. Whilst these things were happening, Mary Ann kept earnestly pressing Edward to fulfil his promise and marry her on the date originally fixed.

"No," said Clarke, "I should rather put it off now till the funeral is over and the things are settled."

"Oh, the wedding can't be put off," replied the girl "You know how I am—my wedding dress and everything is made, and we can just go to church and be quietly married, and then see to the funeral afterwards; I could easily take my wedding things off and then go into black."

"No," said Edward, "I shan't do that; I'm sure I ain't going to the church first,"

Mary hereupon became very angry, and told him that it was his solemn duty to take her to church as he had promised; but just at this point of the conversation four policemen entered the cottage and told them both that they would have to go to the police station at once.

"What for?" asked Clarke.

"What do you want us to go to the station for? Can't you ask us anything you want to know here?" added Mary Ann.

"No," answered the officer; "you will both have to go to the station."

Mary Ann asked if it would not do in a day or two, as they were about to be married, but the police were inexorable, and took them into custody forthwith. On arriving at the station Mary Ann was charged with having wilfully poisoned her uncle, and was then locked up.

Clarke was soon afterwards brought in, and charged with having been an accessory to the murder. He, too, was locked up in the same station, but, of course, in another cell.

The inquest was held at a tavern in Spon Street, called the "King William the Fourth," and a verdict of "Wilful Murder" was returned against Mary Ann Higgins, and also a verdict against Edward Clarke of "being an accessory before and after the fact."

In the following August the two prisoners were tried before Mr. Justice Littledale, the case creating the most intense interest throughout the Midland counties. It was proved by a youth employed in a chemist's shop, close to the house of the deceased, that a few days before the death of the female prisoner's uncle, she (the prisoner) came to the shop and asked to be served with a pennyworth of arsenic to poison rats with. He informed her that he could not make less than two pennyworth, and also that he was not allowed to supply her with the poison unless she was accompanied by a witness who knew her.

The girl retired, and shortly afterwards returned with a friend named Elizabeth Russell, and was then supplied with the arsenic.

Elizabeth Russell, a young woman, deposed that on a day in the week in which William Higgins died, the female prisoner stopped her in the street and asked her if she would mind going with her as far as the druggist's. She did so, and they went to Messrs. Stott and Wyley's, where Mary Ann Higgins bought some arsenic. On their way along the street the prisoner looked at the label, which was marked "Poison," and she tore it off and threw it away, saying, "I wonder what he's put that on for; I don't want that on."

Mary Ann Southam, who lived in Spon Street, said that on the evening the deceased died, Mary Ann Higgins met her and asked her if she had seen Edward Clarke, as she was looking for him. She told witness that she wanted him to come and sit up with her, as her uncle was taken very ill.

Mrs. Southam swore that on the night of the death of the deceased she went with other neighbours to see if she could be of any assistance, and while there two basins were found in the pantry, partly full of soup. The basins were shown to the female prisoner, and she was asked whether that was what she and her uncle had for supper. Mary Ann said, "Yes; one was her basin and the other was her uncle's." They then asked her which was hers, and she pointed to the lighter coloured of the two. They then called her attention to the fact that one seemed to have a sort of powder in it, and she said, "Yes, it was made on two different days. One I made on the Saturday, and the other on the Monday, and one lot I thickened with flour and the other with oatmeal. The darker of the two was what my uncle left."

The medical evidence proved that on making the post-mortem examination the stomach and intestines of the deceased were found to be greatly inflamed, and that on analysing the contents of the viscera a large quantity of arsenic was found. The remains of the pea soup which the deceased had had for his supper also contained a considerable quantity of arsenic.

Benjamin Hume said he knew the prisoner, Edward Clarke, and had seen him several times during the four or five weeks preceding the death of William Higgins. Previous to that Clarke used to be very short of money, but latterly he had had a good bit. He had seen him change a guinea and some silver. He had also bought himself a watch and some clothes. Clarke had told him that he had been asked in church, and was going to be married to Mary Ann Higgins.

Mr. Wilson, John Gavey, and other witnesses proved that during several weeks prior to the death of deceased they had seen Clarke with a great deal more money than he used to have. Further evidence was given, showing that Clarke had said he was in Higgins's house when the old man had his supper, and then went to bed about eight o'clock, sick and ill. He had told them also that he had been asked at church with the girl, and that the old man had got some money in the house, and more out at interest.

Mrs. Ruth Clarke, the mother of the male prisoner, said her son worked for Messrs. Vale and Robinson, watch manufacturers. On the night of the death of Higgins, her son came home about midnight, and said that the poor old man was very sick and ill, and that he had gone to bed very bad. He then retired to rest, and when he got up at a quarter to six he said he should go round and see how poor old Higgins was.

William Crofts said he had seen Clarke with a good deal of money, and one day he said to him, "You seem pretty flush of money," and Clarke replied, "Yes, fairly." Witness then said to him, "How do you manage it?" Clarke replied, "Why, I ask my girl for it, and if she don't give it me, I then say, 'Well, I'll be hanged if I'll come again,' and then she goes and fetches it."

Thomas Gardener said he was one of the watchmen, and he said to the girl, "What a pity it is you have been persuaded to do this by anybody." She then said, "I did it myself, because my uncle had some words with me, as at last he was against my marrying Clarke."

The old man had told her that she was to have all he had when he died, and as she wanted to get married, she got the arsenic and put two teaspoonfuls into his basin, and then poured the soup on to it. All the money that Clarke had had from her was three shillings, one half-sovereign, and one guinea.

After the evidence had been given, the prisoners were asked whether they had anything to say, and the female prisoner said she had not.

The male prisoner, Clarke, said he was not able to address the jury as he would wish, but he had, instead, prepared a written defence, which he hoped he would be allowed to read. He then read a very lengthy, telling, and eloquent statement, in which he assured the jury, on his most solemn oath, that he was perfectly innocent of the crime imputed to him. He said he not only had no hand in the poisoning, but he had no knowledge, either before or after the old man's death, that poison had been given to him till he heard it hinted at by the neighbours, and afterwards in the statements made before the coroner. He admitted that he was in the house during the time the old man was taking his supper, and also during a part of the time he was ill, but he neither saw nor knew anything of poison either having been intended or given to him. Respecting the assertions that he had been flush of money, they were great exaggerations, for he had had but a very trifling sum indeed from the girl. There was nothing in his having a little money to spend, seeing he worked at a trade, and the statement that he said he could always get money by threatening to stop away from the girl was an untruth. He asked the jury to remember that it had been sworn the girl had got a stranger to go with her for the poison, and even the girl herself had stated that no one had persuaded her to the act. He concluded by reminding the jury that his life was now in their hands, and as there had not been one single act proved against him, he felt certain that, in justice to him, they would say he was not guilty.

The jury, after a short consultation, found the prisoner, Mary Ann Higgins, guilty of wilful murder, and as they believed that she committed the act deliberately and alone, they found the prisoner, Edward Clarke, not guilty.

Clarke was, therefore, discharged, and at once left the dock, leaving his intended wife standing there alone. The judge, then assuming the black cap, said: "Mary Ann Higgins, you have been found guilty, upon the most clear and conclusive evidence, of the terrible crime of wilful murder. In the most deliberate way you purchased poison, and in the most systematic and wicked manner you mixed that poison up and with it took away the life of your uncle, the man who had been your guardian, your protector and your friend. It is indeed a sad sight to see one so young—a girl just growing up into womanhood—capable of such a wicked design and cruel murder. I can most solemnly assure you that you have not long to live in this world, for you will soon have to appear before the bar of your Maker, there to answer for the deeds done in the body.

"Let me, therefore, urge upon you not to lose one moment of the time allotted to you here, which will be very short, but use every moment of it to entreat God, whom you have so greatly offended, for mercy and forgiveness.

"I can hold out no hope of mercy to you here, and it now only remains for me to pass upon you the just sentence of the law, and that is that you be taken from hence to the gaol from whence you came, and from thence to a place of execution, and that you be there hanged by the neck till you are dead, and that after that your body be given to the surgeons for dissection, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

The condemned girl was then removed to the cells.

The murder caused such a thrill of horror throughout the Midlands, and such a multitude of people was expected

to assemble to witness the execution, that the officials decided to erect the scaffold on a huge open space called Whitley Common.

The wretched girl was attended in gaol whilst awaiting execution by the Rev. S. Paris, jun., and the Rev. R. Franklin, who implored her to repent and ardently exhorted her to pray for forgiveness and clemency. She made two statements in the condemned cell, one that she had been urged by a man to commit the dreadful deed, and the second that she had alone perpetrated the murder, without any or the slightest instigation from anybody.

She was brought from Warwick Gaol the night before the day fixed for the execution and lodged in the city gaol of Coventry during the night. From early morning on the fatal day the road from Coventry to Whitley Common was thronged with vehicles of every kind from the humble donkey cart to the chaise and pair of the wealthy.

At eleven o'clock precisely a state carriage drove up to the front door of the gaol, and the sheriffs came out and took their seats therein. Another vehicle quickly followed, and the governor and deputy-governor of the prison entered, and were quickly driven away. In front of these two carriages was a large body of yeomanry and county constabulary, and behind them an open cart containing the coffin of the unhappy culprit. This cart drew up at the prison door, the girl emerged from the forbidding portals and, mounting a short ladder into the cart, took her seat on the coffin, which was elevated in such a manner that she could be seen by the whole multitude.

Behind her came the two clergymen, who also mounted into the cart, and sat down on two chairs which had been placed therein for them. Two warders next took their seats in the cart, and behind the vehicle, on foot, walked Calcraft, the hangman, carrying the halter in his hand, and accompanied by four javelin-men, two on each side of him. More javelin-men walked on each side of the cart, and the mournful procession started. The miserable girl recognised many of her old friends and playmates as she proceeded on her way to death, and she sobbed aloud several times as the familiar faces caught her eye. She joined the two clergymen in repeating some passages of Scripture, such as, "Lord, make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and my age is as nothing before Thee."

When the cortege arrived at the edge of the common, and the gallows came into view, she was seized with a violent trembling, the blood left her face, and she seemed about to collapse, but, pulling herself together, she offered up one or two fervent prayers for mercy, and finished the dreadful journey in tears, but in a comparatively calm state, externally at least. On the procession arriving at the foot of the scaffold the crowd removed their hats, and the officiating clergyman began to read the burial service: "Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were, a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." The two clergymen ascended the platform, and were followed by the girl, who immediately placed herself beneath the fatal beam. Several warders then mounted the scaffold, and after them came the sheriffs, the governor of the gaol, and, finally, Calcraft, who at once put the noose round the girl's neck and fastened the other end of the rope to the beam above. He then pinioned her legs and arms, the wretched convict standing all the time quite firm and unmoved. Untying her bonnet, he took it off and put it down on the platform, and then shook hands with her. The young woman then shook hands with the two clergyman and said, "God bless you! God bless you!" These were the last words she ever spoke, as Calcraft at once put the white cap on her head and pulled it down over her face, and the clergymen's voices could be heard in unison, amid the stillness with which the multitude greeted the last preparations, repeating the burial service: "In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour but of Thee, O Lord?" Whilst they were saying these words Calcraft had gone beneath the scaffold and drawn the bolt, and as the priests finished the above sentence the drop fell. The girl dropped, and then sprang again into the air. A shriek of horror came from the crowd at the sight, and still further cries of consternation were heard as the poor wretch struggled and bounded in space. The strap with which her legs were pinioned became loose, probably through being buckled over her dress and other clothes, and she was able to touch with her right foot the edge of the drop as she swung to and fro. This seemed to relieve the pressure on her wind-pipe and give her fresh strength to struggle, which she did in the most fearful manner. She spun round with great rapidity, writhed, turned, and plunged horribly. She was a big, strong, well-formed and developed girl, and it seemed as if her sufferings would be prolonged indefinitely. There were loud cries of "Shame!" "Where's the hangman?" and Calcraft at once jumped up and attempted to catch hold of her legs, but she just then gave a plunge and a kick, which caught him in the chest and knocked him backwards against the side of the scaffold. He again made an attempt to clutch the poor creature's legs, and this time he succeeded in grasping her round the knees, and he swung with his full weight on her for several minutes in the attempt to dislocate her neck. The scene was a painful one, and she writhed convulsively long after Calcraft had added his weight to hers in the seemingly fruitless attempt to end her sufferings. By degrees, however, her contortions grew fainter, and finally she hung, a corpse, at the end of the hangman's halter. After having hung the usual time, the body was cut down and handed to the surgeons for dissection.

Such was the dreadful end of this girl, who chose the path of evil instead of that of righteousness, and she was thus led to the gallows, and not, as she hoped and intended it would be, to the church and to God's altar.

M. de Paris, M.D.

The old principle of he who breaks can mend, was exemplified in France right up to the time of the Revolution of 1789. Throughout the country the common people believed that as the executioner spent his time in breaking people on the wheel and in cutting off heads, he was naturally the most qualified person to perform surgical operations. However gruesome it may seem, it is a well-established fact that many of the provincial executioners were frequently called in to treat cases of fracture, as well as perform amputations. The belief in the skill of the "bourreau" was largely due to the fact that his calling necessitated his living apart from other men, and he was supposed to devote all his leisure to studying the human frame. The eldest of the Sansons, originally an officer in the French Army, and the first genuine M. de Paris, was a first-rate bone-setter; while the executioner of Nimes had quite a reputation as a surgeon.

An Illegal Tax.

Even the most bitter opponent of taxes may be surprised to learn that one of our existing imposts is really illegal, and in distinct contravention of one of the most important bulwarks of British freedom. This illegal tax is the gun tax. The "Bill of Rights," a statute second in importance only to the Magna Charta, distinctly lays down the law that "Protestant subjects may have arms for their defence." This section of the great Act has never been repealed or altered, for it is highly dangerous to tamper with any of the charters of the British nation, and accordingly the gun tax is contrary to law. Whether it could be successfully tested in practice, is quite another matter. Nor would any right-thinking person wish it to be abolished, but rather would plead for its stricter enforcement. So much harm is done yearly by the sale of firearms to the irresponsible and criminal, that it would be well if the sale of weapons was restricted to a very few firms, the price enhanced, and the strictest inquiries made as to the character of the person to whom the gun or pistol is to be sold, and as to the use to which it is to be put.

Punished for Kissing.

Our readers may be astonished to learn that there exists to-day, in a civilised country, a law which makes it criminal to kiss, and as lately as 1891 it was actually put into force. The spot where such an absurd law obtains is the State of Connecticut, which still preserves many of the ordinances passed by King Charles II. when Connecticut was a British colony. One of that monarch's enactments makes it penal to kiss, and a student of Yale University was actually sentenced to fifteen days' imprisonment in the year above mentioned, for kissing the barmaid in a restaurant. From the Laws of Charles II. sprang the celebrated "Blue Laws," of Pennsylvania, and which were accepted in the New England States of America, which made it an offence to "indulge carnally" on the Sabbath, and kissing wife or children was considered a carnal luxury. In the seventeenth century a like restriction was placed on the English and Scotch by the "Laws for the observance of the Lord's Day," which meddlesome statutes forbade kissing, cooking dinner on Sunday, walking for pleasure, and many other harmless acts. Whether from forgetfulness, or from a fear of offending the ultra-evangelistic section of the community, many of these laws have never been repealed, notably that against Sunday trading, which can be seen in full operation at High Wycombe, Bucks, any petty sessions day.

Criminal Problems

SUMMARY JURISDICTION AND THE FIRST OFFENDER.

THERE is no subject in the whole range of criminology more difficult to deal with than that of the first offender and his treatment. To commence with, nothing is known of the culprit beyond the allegations of witnesses for the prosecution, who may be prejudiced, and those for the defence, who are equally biassed. It is difficult to obtain anything like a clear insight into the character of the offender, to see the exact path which he has trodden, to realise what it was that led him into the thorny way of the criminal. On the treatment of the youth who makes his first appearance in the dock at the police court may depend the entire reformation of one who has a tendency towards crime, but who has seen the error of his ways, or the making of a confirmed criminal. We can easily realise, then, how our magistrates—we do not refer to the Great Unpaid, but to the real law-dispensers who have been properly trained for their work—shrink from sending anyone to prison for his first breach of the law, without making the fullest inquiries possible.

To them falls the difficult task of deciding how great a part environment has played in leading the culprit to commit a crime, and whether it would be better for the prisoner to be sent to gaol for a short time, to remove him from that environment, always remembering the "prison stain" which will inevitably rest on the sinner, and prove either his total undoing, or his greatest punishment through life. Nothing whatever may be known of the culprit; his name has probably been unknown even to the police until the act with which he is charged brought him under their notice, and yet the magistrate has to judge. Here the law comes to his rescue, by the provisions of the First Offenders Act, which makes it possible for a magistrate to bind a first offender over in recognisances to come up for judgment if called on.

The wisdom of this measure is obvious. It enables the police to keep an eye on the youth who has strayed into the way of criminals, without him being aware of their supervision; it tends towards the prevention of crime in cases where the youngster has been but the tool of older miscreants, for they abandon the one who they know is an object of attention to their enemies, the detectives, and it leaves no ineradicable slur on the character of the misguided lad, provided he strives to do right in the future. At the same time it takes care that the dignity of the law shall be vindicated if the magistrate has dealt too leniently with the criminal, and given him a chance when he did not deserve it, for when next convicted he can be punished for both offences.

On the young man who has taken his first plunge into the dark waters of evil-doing, the operation of the act is generally beneficial. Though discharged from the dock, he feels that he has not gone free; something is hanging over his head, which, if the protestations of sorrow he has made before the Bench are insincere, helps to keep him straight, for he knows that if again caught doing wrong, he will be severely dealt with. At the same time, if he does well, if he strives to live honestly, he will never be called upon to come up for judgment. To many, wavering between a career of respectability and one of crime, the provisions of the Act have been a positive blessing. If they had been sent to prison they would have felt that they had taken the irrevocable step, and declared against the law for all time; if discharged with a caution, the proceedings before the magistrate would have been a mere farce.

The Act, however, is not meant for those who are convicted of their first crime when of mature years. They have formed their characters; environment can have little effect upon them, and it is to be feared that the prospective punishment which will overtake them if again they offend has no terrors for them. An exception may be made in the case of those who have committed an assault in a fit of passion, or acting under a strong misapprehension, who may be benefited by the provisions of the Act.

Again, nothing strengthens the first offender's fear of the law and of the consequences of evil doing, more than that punishment should speedily follow on the commission of an offence. If any long period elapse between capture and chastisement, the prisoner gets callous, becomes accustomed to incarceration while awaiting trial, grows indifferent to his fate. Imprisonment, when duly meted out to him, has been shorn of its terrors to a certain extent, the sense of shame has been dulled, and the penalty has a lesser effect than it would have had if justice had proceeded apace and at once consigned the offender to a short term of hard labour. Recognising this, our legislature has given magistrates the power to deal with first offenders summarily, even in cases which, in the ordinary course, would have had to go to a jury. To preserve the liberty of the subject, however, and to ensure that every person shall have the right to be tried by a jury of his peers left intact, the consent of the prisoner must be obtained before a magistrate can try such a case himself. Seldom does a guilty first offender elect to be tried by a jury, for he knows that he is likely to receive a much shorter sentence from the magistrate, he avoids a good deal of publicity, and he is spared much suspense. In the interests of the community, too, the Act is a wise one, for it relieves the country of much expense as well as strengthens the popular respect for the law.

These two measures do much to soften the lot of the person who has leant towards crime, but there are still several improvements which could with advantage be introduced into our legislature.

The publicity given to police court cases could well be spared to the first offender. He is given another chance in order that he may redeem his character. If his offence is made public property, his chance of obtaining honest employment is materially lessened, and an obstacle is placed in the way of his reforming himself. The same might be said in the case of those whom the magistrate has sent to gaol for the first time. It is obviously unfair to add to the punishment the stigma, blazoned to the world, of having been in prison; it is adding a punishment to a punishment.

Again, experience has taught us that many a criminal is really confirmed in his wicked ways by his contact with other miscreants in prison. Some attempt has been made to keep the classes of prisoners perfectly separate, but, with our knowledge of the thousand and one ways in which prisoners manage to communicate, we can assert that the present system is very imperfect. It would greatly assist in the reformation of those who have made their first slip if they were confined in a separate gaol, under rather different conditions to those which obtain at present, conditions which would inspire a horror of prison life, instead of the general feeling, which is prevalent among the lower classes, that prison is far less terrible than it is painted. More absolute solitude for short terms, with nothing to do and nothing to look at, would make prison life distasteful to even the laziest person, and would lead to a certain amount of reflection. More individual attention from a chaplain, whose heart was in his work, and who was likely to gain the prisoners' sympathy, might be of use in the case of those sentenced to longer periods of imprisonment; but the real secret of making the first punishment effective lies in the difficult problem of preventing communication in any form between prisoners, and, as far as possible, preventing recognition of each other either in prison or when discharged—an impossible matter unless all convicts were masked while at exercise or in chapel, a repulsive procedure, but one which would be effective.

A Fatherly Feeling.

A YOUTH named Stacey committed a brutal double murder at Portsmouth many years ago. Robbery was the motive, and Stacey, senior, was charged with having been an accessory after the fact. This exemplary paterfamilias, having borne testimony against his hopeful son, was acquitted, and was able to enjoy an excellent view of the latter's execution, during which he smoked a pipe and chatted with the other onlookers.

The Murder Stone near Hindhead.

HINDHEAD is on the borders of Sussex and Surrey, and one of the sights of this lovely neighbourhood is the gloomy "Devil's Punch Bowl," passed by every wayfarer between London and Portsmouth.

A stone with an inscription marks the spot where a fearful murder was committed right at the edge of this sinister-looking hollow in the latter part of the eighteenth century. A sailor returning to his ship at Portsmouth was murdered by his two companions and his body hurled into the "Devil's Bowl." Dickens refers to this memorial stone in "Nicholas Nickleby."

LEAVES FROM . . OUR NOTEBOOK

The Oldest Death Sentence.

For the oldest death sentence extant we have to search in the Amherst papyri, which contain the accounts of the trials of State criminals in Egypt some fifteen hundred years before Christ. The criminal condemned was found guilty of "magic," and was sentenced to death by his judges. The exact method of his exit from this world was left to the culprit himself, who was his own executioner. In England we have no record of capital punishment earlier than B.C. 450, when it was the custom for our ancestors to throw those condemned to die into a quagmire. To determine the oldest known legal punishment is difficult, but it is probable that the palm for penalties, other than death or mutilation, belongs to the Chaldeans, who more than six thousand years ago ordained that whosoever maimed a slave should pay to him daily a measure of corn.

Hanged on Sunday.

Nowadays England would be horrified to learn that a criminal was hanged on a Sunday, but in the times when Good King Hal reigned his officers were not at all particular as to the day when those who had offended the cheery monarch or broken the laws were put out of this world. We have a record of this in old Stowe's "Annales," where, under the date of September 1st, 1538, we find: "The first of September being Sonday, one Cratwell, Hangman of London, and two other, were hanged at the wrestling place by Clerkenwell, for robbing a booth in Bartholomew faire." After the death of Henry VIII., Sunday executions were abolished in this country. In Catholic Europe they never obtained in civilised times, save during the fearful French Revolution, when everything sacred was ridiculed and profaned, and people went to the guillotine on Sundays the same as on other days of the week.

The Right of "Deodand."

The right of "deodand" confers on the lord of the manor, or barony, possessing such right a legal title as heir to all the property, personal or real, of persons committing suicide on such land, with the sole exception of estates held in entail. Such right is possessed by very few lords of the manor to-day, the most celebrated being the lord of the manor of Hampstead, who can claim as heir all the goods and chattels of those who commit suicide upon Hampstead Heath. The last time such a claim was put forward was in 1856, when Mr. Sadleir, M.P. for Sligo, took his own life behind Jack Straw's Castle, after his enormous swindles were discovered. Beside his body was found a silver cream jug, out of which the unhappy man had drunk a draught of prussic acid. Sadleir's goods and chattels were already forfeit to the State to make up for some of his defalcations, but the lord of the manor claimed the cream jug as an acknowledgment of his ancient right. After a little wrangling the ewer was delivered over to the claimant, whose demand was thus satisfied, and who immediately returned it to the relatives of the suicide. It must be remembered that the right only gives power over the property of true suicides, that is over the goods of those on whose bodies a verdict of felo-de-se had been returned, and in no way affects the estates of those who have taken their lives when insane.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

CLAYTON (Southend).—The story will shortly appear.

SANITAS.—Yes. Spitting is punished by fine in New Zealand.

EVE.—Unchastity was regarded as an offence against the law of the land as late as 1630.

ARTHUR.—The only co nsel who ever won his case for the Claimant was the late Mr. Montague Williams.

VERITAS.—Perjurers were once liable to be burnt. To-day they are generally rewarded with penal servitude.

H. T.—Your are wrong. Misdemeanours are bailable offences, but the bail may be fixed at a ridiculous sum, say £1,000,000.

BLUSHING.

This miserable habit permanently cured in a few days. For either sex. Particulars of this strictly private, confidential, harmless, and inexpensive remedy sent for stamped addressed envelope by MRS. MOORE, 1, Borough Road, London.

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I will send absolutely **free** to all who enclose two penny stamps to cover postage, &c., with testimonials and medical certificate, a sample of the most wonderful preparation ever discovered for the natural development of the bust, and by the use of which may be regained a perfect figure, full and lovely. Absolutely harmless, never fails, permanent in its effect. Address in confidence, MRS. H. NEVILLE, 9, Newington Causeway, London, S.E.

Hargreaves' Reducing Wafers will in a few weeks permanently cure either sex who are

TOO FAT

without change in diet or other inconvenience. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to quickly remove all superfluous flesh, improving the health and figure. Especially successful in all cases of abdominal obesity and shortness of breath. Sent privately, post free, with full particulars and testimonials, price 1/1½ per box, by MR. F. HARGREAVES, 324, Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London, N.W.

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SUPERFLUOUS HAIRS.—How many ladies with a strong growth of hair upon some prominent part of her features has not cried out from the depths and bitterness of despair, "Is there no relief for this vile intrusion? Must I live on and on and each day develop more and more into a human monstrosity! Must this deformity become still more unsightly, this burden more oppressive?" The answer heretofore given to this appeal has been far from satisfactory, yet we must all admit that we live in an age of new and wonderful inventions, and one of these I claim. To prove this, send in confidence, a stamped addressed envelope, and I will tell you what it is.—Address, MRS. NEVILLE, 9, Newington Causeway, London.

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BILIOUSNESS, SLEEPLESSNESS & WEAKNESS CURED

"ABOUT twelve months ago I began to suffer from distressing pains at the heart, and at the same time from biliousness and constant headache. In those days I never went to bed at night or got up in the morning without a bad headache, and a night's rest did me no good whatever," said Mrs. Elizabeth Allen, of 2, Avering-terrace, East Greenwich, when interviewed by a "Weekly Budget" reporter, and in reply to the Pressman's interrogations she added:

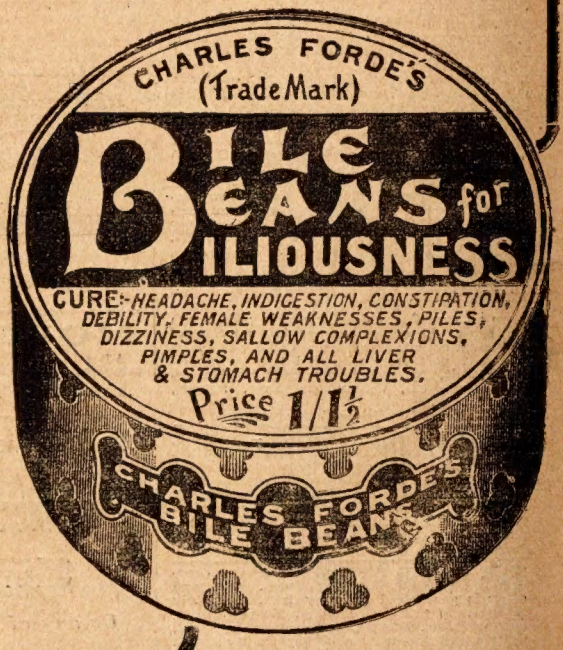
"ALWAYS SLEEPY AND HEAVY"

"I never succeeded in getting what one might call a night's rest. There was always a heavy beating at the heart, and a sensation as though there was a hard lump beneath it. The torture was dreadful. I could not lie on my left side for a moment, nor wear my stays or any clothing that pressed tightly against my side. I was always feeling sleepy and heavy, though I could get no rest, and I had a terrible suffocating sensation, which at times made me think I should go out of my mind. I was thoroughly frightened, as I could not understand myself, and so worried that I became as thin as a rake. All the time my head ached so much that I could not think clearly. The sight of food made me feel sick, and I became quite yellow with biliousness. I had doctors' attention three times, but no relief came from their physic. Then I tried various medicines. They did me no good. At length I was at my worst, when I was advised to try Bile Beans. My husband and I thought the matter over—you see, we had almost lost faith in medicines altogether—and we decided, as a despairing hope, to try the Beans. They cured me, beyond a doubt. I improved from day to day after the first few doses, and by the time I finished the fourth boxful I was a different woman, feeling and looking as well as you see me now."

Mrs. Allen has a family of nine children, and, as every mother knows, must have passed through worry and hard work enough to impair anyone's health. When thoroughly knocked up, however, Bile Beans restored her to robust health, and enabled her to renew her household work with comfort and cheerfulness.

Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness are the product of modern scientific research, and therefore thoroughly up-to-date. They do not merely purge, giving temporary relief only, and leaving the patient weakened, like the out-of-date, so-called remedies of forty or fifty years ago, which contain probably aloes, mercury, and other harmful drugs. Bile Beans, without the slightest discomfort, prompt the liver and digestive organs to act in Nature's normal way, leaving those organs strengthened and stimulated to continue the performance of their duties without further assistance. They produce a gentle action on the bowels, curing or preventing constipation, cleansing the stomach, and ridding the system of all impurities. Do not be misled by claims of half a hundred pills in the box, where probably four to six constitute a dose, and the doses cannot be discontinued. **ONE BILE BEAN IS ONE DOSE.** They can be discontinued after the cure is affected; they are purely vegetable; they do not contain any harmful drugs, and they are the **SAFEST FAMILY MEDICINE.**

BILE BEANS ARE NOT SOLD LOOSE BEING PUT UP IN SEALED BOXES ONLY.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The above complete cure of Mrs. Allen is no isolated instance, but one of the many thousands of cases where Bile Beans have been successful in relieving the sufferer, and the Proprietors have so much faith in the efficacy of their remedy that they will forward you a Sample Box Free, and a book on Liver and Digestive Ailments, if you cut out accompanying Coupon, and send it with your name and address and a penny stamp (to cover return postage) to the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., Greek Street, Leeds.

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Famous Crimes, Oct. 5, 1903.

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